

# New Professionals SIG Survey: Early Career Advice - The First Five Years

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The New Professionals SIG is pleased to present the results of the following survey, conducted during April 10-27, 2017: Early Career Advice – The First 5 Years. The survey captured anecdotes, suggestions, and words of wisdom from the CALL/ACBD community for the student and new members of the association.

The demographics collected include the respondent's years of experience within law libraries (Table 1.1), and the type of law library they primarily or currently work within (Table 1.2). The following question section asked for advice on course selection, job applications, interviews, networking, and other aspects of professional life. Respondents remain anonymous so answers are shown in their entirety.

**Thank you very much to all who completed the survey! The wealth of information you have provided with your thoughts and experiences will be invaluable to new professionals within the association.**

## Survey Highlights

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- Of 61 total responses, 43 respondents passed along anecdotes.
- The average number of years of experience of respondents is 15 years.
- The majority of respondents have primarily worked or currently work within a private law library.

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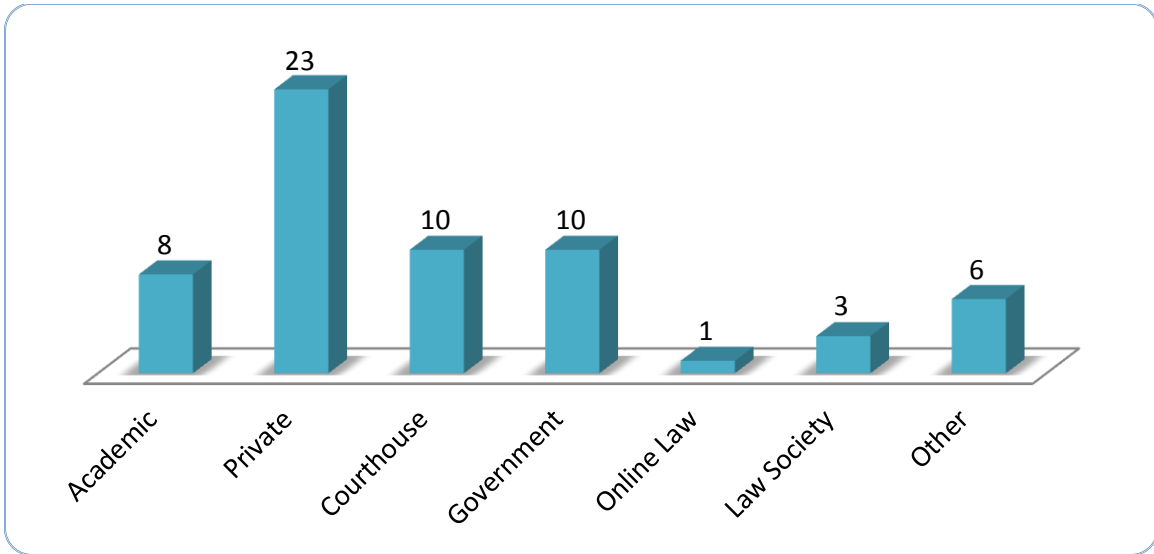
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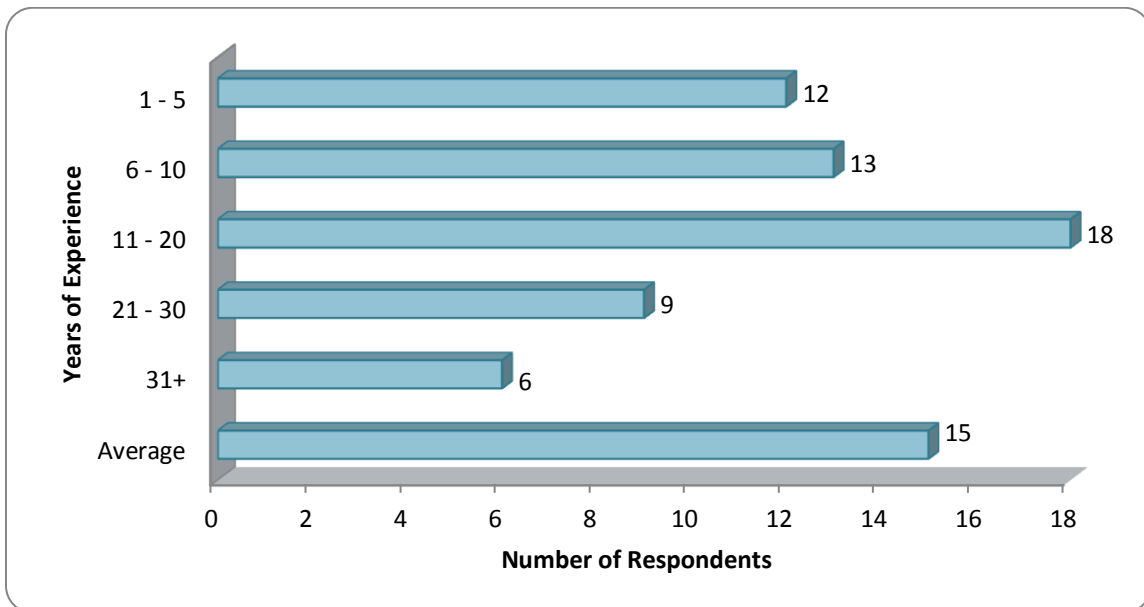
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# Respondent Demographics

**Table 1.1: Law Library Types**



**Table 1.2: Years of Experience**



# Survey Questions & Responses

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## WHAT COURSES AND/OR EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES WOULD YOU RECOMMEND FOR AN ASPIRING LAW LIBRARIAN?

- Law librarianship/legal research classes when taking your MLIS Join CALL - attend conferences if possible Take ongoing professional classes as they become available - webinars, etc. Try to find library related work if you don't have any experience - or volunteer for library related organizations.
- Programming, html5 or .net and SQL. Excel. Join a professional association and become involved in the local executive at any level (event organizing, programming, secretary). Statistics, it's good for you! Project management, business analysis. Pursue certification in MS SharePoint or some other application used for collaboration and information management.
- I took Law and Security courses at local community college to learn the court system and learn terminology. Have also taken numerous on line courses on legislation, legal research etc and of course the CALL webinars when applicable to my situation/job
- Enjoy your chosen area of academia during undergrad. All areas of librarianship, including law librarians are multi-disciplinary. Get the most of your area, then move on.
- If you can take a legal research course, that would be ideal because it will give you a basic understanding of the court system, how legislation is passed and comes into force, and introduces you to the specialized tools and resources used in legal research. Even if you can't take a legal research course, there are several very good texts on conducting legal research that you can read including The Practical Guide to Canadian Legal Research and the Legal Research Handbook. If you can join a professional association to help with networking and continuing education, that is also helpful. In the law library community, there are often smaller local associations (at least in major urban centres) with very reasonable membership rates.
- Current IT courses, Marketing courses to ensure stakeholders understand the information professional environment, Management and Leadership courses (you're as good as your employees), Conferences, webinars, Memberships to Associations to ensure you are networking early in your role as a Information Professional- don't wait to get involved.
- Legal research, legal research, legal research. For extracurricular activities I recommend 'mastering the blog', involvement in the local community, any other social activities that might assist networking.
- Legal Research / Legal Information Services
- You don't need a law degree to be a law librarian, but a good overview of the legal system is incredibly helpful - look to your University's law school, political science department, etc. to find a course that will fill in these blanks. If your University's law school will let you sign up for intellectual property law, take it. Also, consider a course in business law, if you would like to work at a firm - most business programs offer their students a course that would give you all of the basics. If your University's law school has lunch and learns, lecture events, etc., attend all of them that you can.

Also, my MLIS program offered a course that covered curriculum development, learning styles, teaching skills, etc. It continues to be very helpful to me when creating legal research programs for students and/or presenting to lawyers.

- Cataloguing turned out to be more useful than I expected (even though we have a dedicated cataloguer). Any courses or activities that: - give you experience with reference interviews and collection development - deal with project management, budgeting, and managing a staff / management styles - discuss embedded librarianship - teach you about the breadth of library/information jobs that exist
- A course in legal research, perhaps via CALL/ACBD. An MLIS program course in law librarianship, offered in some MLIS programs. An MLIS course in government publications. A summer job, co-op position, or internship in a law library. Law school, if possible, or at least the first year or two. Visits to representative examples of the various types of law libraries to understand the resources they hold and the people they serve or work with.
- Anything involving leadership and demonstrating ability to organize, plan, and execute a large project, also activities demonstrating ability to make judgment calls
- Canadian and International legal research, business research on licensed databases Courses on skills for: business group presentations law records management as it pertains to law practice legal discovery -what it is and how it ties in with records information management. This is sometimes shunted off to IT, which is not always the right group. project management
- Take an introduction to law librarianship if your faculty offers it. A business libraries course is a great addition - you may be working with the marketing department, so knowing business sources is a huge benefit. Read/watch the news to understand what's going on in the legal world and public policy.
- Reference course, volunteering at term paper clinics and working in public service
- Part-time job in a law library during library school. Courses should include law librarianship, government documents, management, and technology.
- Courses on legal research, read up on some of the main areas of law i.e. constitutional
- Understanding and working with government sources, foundations of the law classes
- A course in cataloguing and classification. A course in legal bibliography, if available. A course in statutes / how laws are made. Involvement in the local law library association by attending meetings, signing up for library tours, volunteering for something.
- Take advantage of the opportunities presented in the form of webinars offered through CALL and other organizations. I completed the 2 year library technician program (you need to know all aspects of the library from the roots up). I also completed the Public Administration Certificate.
- In library school, recommend taking: 1. Legal Information, Legal Bibliography, or similar course name, 2. Government Publications, Government Documents, or similar course name, 3. Advanced Reference In addition, try to attend New Law Librarians' Institute offered by CALL. Consider doing a

Masters of Studies in Law (at UofT or Western). Try to do a practicum or co-op placement at a law library

- Government documents, legal librarianship and literature, possible Future Law Librarians' Article Club [this does not exist yet, to my knowledge, but it should - I wish I'd thought of it while I was still in school instead of right now]. Practicum in law library if available and networking! Associations, social events, etc. Courses on how to teach adults
- I received mentorship from Barbara Clubb, retired Chief Librarian for the City of Ottawa Libraries. Her advice included customer service, janitorial, coding, bookkeeping, law, and the MLIS.
- FIS, U of T. Legal Research on the Web
- Project management, marketing, law librarianship, website development, statistical analysis/research methodology
- Law library/information resources course, web development, project management
- Management; accounting; how to teach; substantive law courses; database management; as well as the traditional legal research skills.
- If there is a law library association in your city, join it (NCALL, TALL, VALL etc). Never stop learning - attend CALL conference, read the literature, seek out interesting workshops and seminars.
- Any subject can be applied to the profession, but take advantage of any educational opportunities available.
- I don't think coursework matters a great deal, but I would suggest any business-focused courses, e.g. marketing in libraries, management of information organizations, in addition to courses in information management, information architecture, preservation, etc. Obviously a course in legal information, if available, would be ideal, but many schools do not offer one. It helps a great deal to have an understanding of an interest in the Canadian political and legal systems; backgrounds in law, poli sci or Canadian history are useful.
- Any kind of legal research courses, or reference/research courses.
- Joining local and national professional associations so as to gain the benefit of more experienced members' knowledge; taking vendors' free online webinars to keep up with new tools and technologies.
- Anything that interests you.
- Get an MLS (although some law firms will hire you without an MLS, many other organizations such as Government Law Libraries or Universities will not) 2. Try to find work (even if it temporary or voluntary) in a legal environment (Law has its own language and you need to know that language) 3. take any courses at school that are legal/government in nature
- The Legal Research course at SLAIS, U of T; the professional development seminars organized by VALL, TALL, and CALL; get involved with professional organizations like TALL, VALL and CALL.

- A course on the organization of information
- Project management; Technology (particularly data analysis/coding/app development/networking/data architecture - dabbling in these areas is common and knowing enough to be able to liaise with IT with confidence is a great toolbox item)
- Management, developing strategy, financial accounting
- Human resources, budgeting/business practices course(s), understanding coding, HTML, understanding contracts (come into play when purchasing online tools, dealing with unionized staff, employment contracts).
- A course specializing in legal librarianship. Becoming a student member of CALL, and possibly other organizations such as TALL.
- CALL New Law Librarian Institute (NLLI) MLIS law librarian course job. Shadow a law librarian.
- MLIS Degree, provincial library association meeting (ex: OCLA in Ontario)
- Join Law Library associations, but also think of other library associations outside of CALL Keep an eye out for trends such as machine learning/AI, project management, change management, knowledge management, User Experience (UX), process improvement etc. and join associations and groups outside of the library profession that address these skill sets Subscribe to feeds, join LinkedIn groups, borrow/buy books Be open to growing your network, the best feedback, ideas and learning come from the people you know

## **BASED ON YOUR EXPERIENCE, WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD RÉSUMÉ AND COVER LETTER FOR A LAW LIBRARY JOB APPLICATION?**

- Legal research skills can be learned - but a strong work ethic, willingness to learn, aptitude for analytical thinking, commitment to client service are things you can't really learn on the job or in a classroom. These are things you need to have before you even arrive on your first day of work. When preparing your résumé and cover letter, be sure to demonstrate the ways you possess those qualities and skills.
- Use the most current resume format, as they change all the time. Do the research before drafting the cover letter; know the culture. Stress what you think you can contribute.
- Have a resume that is easy to read, cover letter should be 1-2 pages and should speak to your experiences that will make you a good fit.
- One that shows how the candidate meets all or at least the most important qualifications one that is not too horrible to read (not that this is easy)
- Succinct summary profile statement at top. Your top skills as it relates to job. Should not talk about future career aspirations positions should highlight what you achieved, not what job responsibilities were. Be up to 2 pages long or less...even for candidates who have worked for several employers.
- Read the ad closely, and tailor your cover letter to what's being requested. Draw a line between your experience and the qualities being sought. Do not make the reader assume that your experience is relevant - tell us how it makes you qualified.
- Resume: include all extracurricular even if they are not directly related to law libraries, include professional development activities; proofread for spelling errors Cover letter: link experience, whether at a professional or a student job, to line items in the job posting i.e. show how you are qualified; include references to the company's values; proofread for spelling errors; include an electronic signature
- Concise, mentioning relevant experience, demonstrate initiative through your previous involvements.
- If legal terminology is used, correct use of that terminology. An understanding of the nature of work and people served in the type of law library (law firm, academic, government, court, corporate, etc) offering the position. Correct grammar and punctuation. Clear understanding of the difference between legal advice, legal interpretation, and legal information access points. Clear evidence of a willingness to learn and grow. Comfort with new, developing, and the idea of yet-to-be developed technology.
- The characteristics of a good résumé and cover letter would be to ensure that these present a detailed, yet concise, picture of you. Include all work experience and any other activities that show who you are.
- A resume where it's easy to see what the applicant was doing continuously for the years after high school. Including interests and extra-curricular activities. Descriptions of responsibilities that are



realistic and do not use inflated language. A cover letter that shows the applicant read the job advertisement carefully and highlighted the relevant qualifications. A cover letter that shows some research into the firm to which the applicant is applying. A mention of any connection to the employer, i.e., why did the applicant choose to apply here. In other words, not a cover letter that could have been sent in application for a job anywhere.

- Well organized, good syntax, clean and easy to read
- Make sure that your resume and cover letter explicitly mentioned everything in the job posting
- Cover letter- Intro/ Second paragraph. Restate and identify your strengths for the position you are applying for. This might include Leading functions, Planning Functions and Key competencies. This is concise and to the point; your resume will expand on your experience and education. Résumé: Experience, Education, Volunteer experience, Memberships and organizations. There are good templates of Résumés online available.
- Easy to scan (resume), not too long cover letter
- Don't forget translatable skills, such as customer service experience in other fields.
- Succinct - try to avoid jargon, write in plain language. Don't make any spelling or grammar errors. Don't plagiarize parts of your cover letter, it's noticeable. The cover letter should be one page; the resume should only be 2 pages. Talk about how the organization benefits by hiring you (what do you bring to us), not what the organization can do for you.
- Excellent spelling and grammar, demonstrated interest in law libraries, through part-time job, concentration, and background.
- Confidence, familiarity with the lingo, transferable skills (doesn't really matter what industry /hospitality & retail work are good, too), volunteer experience in library field
- Don't include a list of all your courses taken or your grades. Do focus on what aspect of the course most relevant to the job you are applying for taught you. Focus on achievements not a list of tasks, whether at university, in a summer job or even a McJob - for example as a bartender, I learned to manage difficult customers.
- The best thing you can do (regardless of the type of position you're applying for) is to tailor your résumé to the job posting and show how you meet the qualifications.
- Will I be able to cross reference your name on the CALL Members list? Are you visible at the local law library group meetings. Have you cold called for job shadowing or coffee date discovery meetings. It is a small niche market and if you aren't able to target the local market in person, it would be excellent to have a letter of introduction/reference letter attached to your application package. Don't be afraid to name drop on your cover letter.
- Clear, straight forward, use proper terminology, short and to the point

- I don't think there is a distinction between characteristics of a letter or resume for a law library job versus another type of position. I look for people that submit a letter and resume that is error free (that's basic), answers any requests in an ad, and hopefully shows some passion and interest.
- Enthusiasm and a clear interest in law. But the interest doesn't have to be because the person has a law degree or has taken a legal librarianship course. It could be because they did a work/study at a law library and found it fascinating.
- Include something that helps you stand out, along with your work experience - such as your volunteer experience, hobbies/interests, and your style of writing can help me assess and learn more about whether I want to interview you  
Excellent written communication - no grammar and spelling mistakes  
Solid research skills are a must, but also someone who is open to learning, team player, self-starter, independent thinker and taking guidance from others, humility
- Be specific about how your past experience makes you a qualified applicant, point to measurable achievements. Create the letter specifically for the job application (but try not to change your resume much). Find out all you can about the job, beyond the job application, so you know what is important to the employer and you can emphasize the important and not focus on the not so important.
- Both should be spell checked. Have stories ready and practice. Get someone to review your stories and your storytelling. Ask your references what they would say. Always give your reference a heads up if you have given their name and check that you have their latest contact information. Send them the job description and your resume.
- Good resumes have a nice design/feel. Shows the applicant cares about presentation. Cover letters: Show a little personality. Caveat: I work in a one-person law firm and have been here for 27 years. Not much experience with reading resumes. My comments are based on the articling resumes and cover letters I have reviewed over the years.
- Highlight volunteer experience and activity in library associations, especially if you are light on library/law library experience. Tailor cover letter to the specific job you're applying for. Use buzzwords/phrases from the job advertisement in your cover letter and resume.
- Skills that other individuals don't have. Identify skills that set you apart. For example: coding, graphic design, finance or management training.
- Experience working in a law library, government documents library, or public library with law reference collection
- Be succinct and fearless
- Emphasize relevant skills: Research experience, customer service experience, basic cataloguing skills, bilingualism, ability to deal with difficult people, time management. Use examples.
- Quantification of experience; always, always talking about what you can bring to the employer and clientele.

- I am looking for evidence that an applicant is actually interested in pursuing a career in law librarianship, or special librarianship more generally. This could be obtained through co-ops, professional experience courses, volunteer work, courses, etc. I am also looking for evidence that the applicant shows initiative, good judgment and is a good problem-solver. I also want to know that the applicant understands my organization and what we do.
- Brief. Mention only last 3 positions. Include latest training. Do not mention age.
- Be clear and concise - and brief. Highlight your technology skills (example, database research), your legal experience, time management, and also your customer service skills - law library patrons are often in a rush, and under a lot of pressure, and can occasionally come across as curt.
- Your resume must show that you are interested in client services and can work in a fast paced environment with quick deadlines
- To be honest, I still feel too intimidated to even do many applications for MLIS programs. The few which I have done, I felt I was competing against folks with 4.3 GPAs or 40 years professional experience. My 3.0 GPA and 10 years experience doesn't stack up, nor bilingualism.

## **WHAT DO'S AND DON'TS WOULD YOU PASS ON TO THOSE APPROACHING THEIR FIRST LAW LIBRARY JOB INTERVIEWS?**

- Like any other library interview, prepare well. Practice your answers. You will probably be asked that question that you've been asked at any other library interview. Know what the firm specializes in, what values the firm ascribes to, and, what pro bono work it is involved in. Know the names of your interviewers and their titles. Prepare 3-5 questions to ask about the job and the firm when you are given the chance to ask questions at the end. Know the range of law firm librarian salaries so you can negotiate a fair salary if you are offered the position. Be on time. Wear a suit. Bring copies of resume and cover letter for each interviewer, a pen, some paper, and your prepared questions. Do not become modest about your accomplishments. You are your best cheerleader because you know what you have accomplished. Be confident. Be enthusiastic. Smile. Finally, remember that if you got the interview, the firm already knows that you can do the job.
- Importance of being positive about previous experience and how it prepared you for future roles. Anticipate likely questions and practice answering them with a friend. think about the stories you want to tell and possible openings to listen for to tell the story.
- Do some research on the law library and the organization where you are interviewing before the interview. If possible, talk to some staff (current or former) from the library to get a fuller picture of the organization, the library and its operations. Anticipate the most obvious questions might be asked. Why does this job interest you? What can you bring to the position, etc. Think about how you would answer. Do a mock interview with a friend or colleague to prepare.
- Be confident - don't ramble in your answers - give lots of examples - also, look at the interviewers when you are answering their questions
- Research the types of law practised by the firm, the number of lawyers served, etc. Look at the CALL salary survey in advance so you have a general idea of what a starting salary might look like in your situation. If you've never done legal research, research the basics of the legal system (legislation, case law). If you've never used Westlaw or Quicklaw, familiarize yourself with them as best you can. Dress professionally. Be courteous to everyone and anyone you speak to, including the receptionist(s).
- Do be yourself. Do listen carefully to the questions asked. Do try to make a personal connection with the interviewer. Do prepare questions in advance about the job that cover more than salary and benefits. Do dress professionally. Do send a thank you for the interview. Don't be afraid to ask clarification if there is something you don't understand.
- Be cordial and articulate yourself well.
- Research the company. Have 1-2 thoughtful questions at interview end that ties in company + job role. Know your key legal research methods and platforms. Be prepared for scenario questions.
- Be sure the employer knows that you're willing to learn new skills. Ask if the firm or academic institution offers any training, or is willing to sponsor new training.

- Prepare - review anything you can find out about the larger institution (university, court, and agency), the library, and the position. Don't try to say you can do something if you can't. On the other hand don't under sell.
- Any jobs, really, look up the organization and read their annual report or the parent organization's mandate. Ask how supportive the employer will be of your personal goals (continuing education, professional association involvement, work-life balance). But only ask that after the interview and only after showing your real interest in the organization and the job. Dress the part - lawyers tend to be conservative, remove the piercings, cover the tattoos and ask if there is a dress code (if you get the job and want to display both or either). That doesn't mean that diversity is not valued in law libraries. But it can be distracting in the interview.
- Just be confident
- Dress professionally, do your research on the place of employment and their practices. Present a confident and calm demeanor (you will be the person ultimately managing expectations of lawyers, Judges, public patrons and students in a library setting) Don't be afraid to ask questions and have a couple prepared.
- Stay calm and do your research on what the position involves
- Do - listen to your interviewers. What are they trying to tell you about the position? Don't assume anything; ask for more information or clarification if you are not sure.
- Do research the organization and understand their values and culture and tie that into your responses where appropriate. Do brainstorm interview questions related to what's communicated in the job posting (qualifications, organizational values/expectations) and practice answering the questions. Do write a thank you card/email to your interviewers.
- Don't overstate your knowledge - be clear on what you bring and where you still have room to grow - but do know how the experience you DO have might be a valuable addition to a library team! Be prepared - if a firm, know some details about the firm's practice areas
- Be smart in your dress and demeanor, be respectful, be fearless, be truthful
- Research who you are interviewing with and where to get a sense of that specific work environment
- Do read up on the employer. Do some practice questions: prepare answers to questions like "why do you want this job", a strengths and weaknesses question and "what distinguishes you from the rest of the pack" question. Employers always ask these, and you can make yourself less nervous by preparing good answers in advance.
- In an interview (or even just in conversations with librarians), don't say that you went to library school because you couldn't find a job in a different field. And don't say that you rarely used the library as a student. I've heard comments such as those and they really turn me off from wanting to hire someone.

- Simple neat, comfortable clothing. Navy suit still a good idea. Be yourself. Relax Show some relevant knowledge, and interest in the position. Study web/government sites on common interview questions asked. (Public libraries have these.) Have examples handy/memorized because it is very hard to think them up on the spot, especially in person. Don't acquiesce when someone (especially male co-interviewer) suggests that you "only worked part time" when you were actually a busy consultant. Be on the alert for pre-judging of female applicants by male interviewers. If interview does not go well, the job was probably not worth it.
- Try not to sound like a lawyer if you are not one. Please understand the work that is done in the organization as a whole. Do research the organization and, to the extent possible, the people you will interview with. Do have some familiarity of basic legal or industry-specific resources. Communicate that you are a good learner, adaptable worker, and support the team.
- Take 3 deep breaths before you go into the room and smile. If you know the job is a stretch, when they ask you if you have any questions be prepared to say that there are a few areas where you know that your experience is not as rigorous, but state this is what you are looking for. A job that will continue you along your career path, etc. Do not accept an interview and then not show up.
- You will be working in a corporate/legal type environment. They want to know how you can bring valued to the organization. Bring a business attitude to the job interview. Dress accordingly.
- DO - make eye contact, use pauses when speaking, good grooming and professional outfit, be honest about your experience and share with me where you want to grow, ask questions about the job and organization you are applying for DON'T - fill up every pause, be assertive but not aggressive, be too apologetic for not having enough experience, over-qualify your work experience to fit the job you are applying for
- Don't Panic. Also, bring a pad of paper and a pen in case they give you details you wish to record about the job.
- I look for candidates who project confidence and demonstrate listening skills. For private firms, I love to hear about connections (my brother-in-law's, sisters ex husbands' cousin had a house deal with your firm....my hairdresser's family friend volunteers with your community fund...I notice on your website that...). I like to see investment on the part of a candidate that tells me they really want to work for my organization not just that they really want to work.
- Show enthusiasm, positivity, and be genuine. Being a law librarian is all about customer service. One can always learn now to update legislation, master search syntax etc. One can't easily learn how to be a 'people person'.
- Know the major Canadian legal databases (you don't need to be an expert). Have a general understanding of how a bill becomes a law and the court system. Have an understanding of basic legal research patterns (starting with secondary sources, noting up cases, etc.). Know the names of a few of the main resource types for legal research (legal encyclopedias, etc.)
- Being nervous is normal - be honest. If it's not a culture/personality fit, it's better to know now. Treat it like a two way conversation; it's okay to go back and add to your answer from a couple of questions ago. If you don't have direct experience with something, talk about any transferable skills.

i.e. working as a server = dealing with frustrated clients / different personalities. Ask questions about how things work. Be clear on roles and responsibilities; don't just focus on the strategic or annual plan

- Read Effective Knowledge Management for Law Firms by Matthew Parsons.
- This is your first interview so you will be nervous, but you have to focus on the questions and allow yourself the seconds needed to form your answer. When given the opportunity to say something at the end of the interview, take a deep breath, sum up the few most important things about yourself, and remember to thank them for the interview.
- Study up on the mandate and work of the employer. Review your notes from your legal bibliography or legal research course. Make connections between your prior experience and the skills needed in the law library. Don't speak negatively of past employers or your school.
- Be well prepared; expect substantive law questions and /or questions that ask you to demonstrate specific legal research skills (like using the Abridgment, etc). These were unexpected to me, but common place in law library interviews.
- Do emphasize how your skills and experience qualify you for the position. Do ask questions, related to the position and organization. Don't ask about salary and benefits in an initial interview - save this for a follow-up interview or the job offer discussion.
- Don't be 'trendy' - no super casual pajama pants or jeans. Dress appropriately. Be friendly, but don't overwhelm your interviewer with platitudes. Be direct (and succinct).
- Make your experience relevant to the employer. Don't focus on courses or grades.
- The advice really depends on the type of law library job. The advice would differ on whether you're applying to a government, academic or firm library in terms of how to prepare for the interview and what to expect. In general, however, I suggest finding out as much information about the organization as you can and developing thoughtful questions about the job that reflect some knowledge of the organization. I also suggest taking some time before the interview and do some self-reflection. Know thyself: know what you're good at, what your strengths are, both professionally and in terms of your personality, and how those strengths can help you in the job. Think about those strengths when you are formulating answers to the interview questions

## **NETWORKING IS ESSENTIAL FOR JOB SEARCHERS. WHAT NETWORKING TIPS OR ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO SOMEONE WHO ISN'T A NATURAL?**

- Have some current event items in your mind to speak about for conversational lulls. Practice your job search elevator pitch (I am looking for x,y,z in an employer). Make a list of who you want to speak with and why - share personal stories...I like to hear about your cat/dog/children/parents/book you just read. Keep your chin horizontal to the floor and smile, usually people will come and find you if you are along and look open to conversation (don't check your phone unless you have to refer to your networking notes). Give yourself an achievable goal (I will speak with 2 people I don't know about X), don't leave until you meet it. Don't be afraid to use the telephone - you can have a script and no one sees how uncomfortable you are. Practice your "open for discussion and confident" facial expression/body language. Pretend you are an actor in a play.
- Ask questions and follow-up of the person you're speaking with. Use people's names. Ask them about their career paths and their current position. Go easy on the food and drink at networking events; demonstrate more interest in the people there than in the goodies.
- I'm not a natural, and I find it hard. Try to get used to it. But also, don't deny who you are.
- Attend events and get to know the community. Law librarian communities are smaller, so it's easier to get to know people. Always ask for help in getting to know others in the group - you'll be surprised at how of us are willing to make introductions.
- Don't worry about it too much. Help people out on law library association listservs. Attend a conference or two. Interact with professionals in your field on social media (reply to their blog posts, have a brief discussion on Twitter). Remember that by and large, librarians love to help people, and that includes you!
- Try to find structured networking events, where you are not simply mingling with others in a room, but where there is an activity. Join relevant SIGs and associations. Bring a buddy. If you aren't great at face-to-face communication but come alive with written words, start tweeting and engage with people that way. Networking doesn't come naturally to me either, although I'm getting better at it through years of doing it. Sometimes I like to imagine that I am playing a character for the night, e.g. "outgoing, engaging librarian" rather than "introvert who would much rather be watching Netflix at home". I think about what "outgoing librarian" would say or do in this situation, and then do it. It just becomes more natural after awhile.
- Go slowly - librarians love to talk about what they do, so if you're intimidated by the idea of a social event or by volunteering at a local organization, maybe just make an effort to talk to someone who works in law libraries, take them out for coffee.
- Be yourself, be sincere, and don't be afraid to be honest about being nervous - we will try to make you feel more comfortable (at least I would)
- Look for someone who is one their own and introduce yourself. Everyone wants to make a connection - presumably you are both at a networking event! Bring business cards and remember to hand them out.



- Get involved. Be part of any group that is associated with law libraries. You don't have to get up and give big speeches. Just get your name out there.
- Here's some advice from someone who also isn't a natural networker. Think of networking as a way to be curious. Be humble. As a newbie, asking questions is a great way to go. Think about what you are generally interested in, and network in those areas: your genuine interest will shine through. Look up a few people you know you will meet beforehand to help you come up with questions or topics to discuss (it will also look good that you did some homework) -Don't think of networking as job hunting but rather laying the groundwork for finding out what's out there and getting your name out. If you impress someone, it's quite possible the 6 months down the road, that person will think of you when they hear about an opportunity. People will also be much more willing to meet with you if it's for information and chatting rather than with the pressure of "please hire me!"
- Join a library association (including your provincial one) and get involved on a committee. It will require volunteering for activities that may stretch you but it is a way to meet people.
- Be yourself, be genuinely interested in others; give help whenever you are asked (law library networking at its core, is about reciprocal assistance).
- Joining professional associations and volunteering on boards and committees is one way to get to know other professionals in a way that is different from introducing yourself to strangers in a social networking situation. You get to know others by working together (even remotely) and it can create connections you can draw upon for other reasons like an information interview or mentorship. There are many blogs and books on networking that offer specific tips or approach the concept from different angles. Reading some of this material may help you develop a networking strategy that works for you.
- Go to as many seminars and webinars and conferences as you can. You'll get more comfortable being with people that way
- Offering to help people, joining committees etc are a form of networking that may be easier to start with for beginners and is just as good or better than going out for lunch etc with people.
- Go to networking events with a friend or colleague. Many people don't enjoy networking, you're not alone. Chat with someone who also looks like they don't enjoy networking - this will make breaking the ice with others easier. Practice, practice, practice!
- Break out of your shell! I'm not a natural, either, but when I attend events, I make myself sit next to people I don't know yet and just start chatting.
- Eye contact - confident body language - ask them questions - go "off script" - don't just stick to small talk but try to listen and base your next questions on their responses
- Big or small, it doesn't matter, and try to push yourself out of your comfort zone to participate. Everyone in this profession started somewhere, and we all want to see each other succeed. Be sure to take advantage of mentorship programs and workshops, you will learn a lot and make some great contacts.

- Be respectful and polite while maintaining confidence for first impressions, hand out your card where applicable.
- Join every organization or association you can. See if you can volunteer for anything, even if it seems insignificant.
- TALL/CALL listservs and meetings. Having contacted other libraries for assistance in previous positions.
- It is important to make personal connections inside your place of employment and in the larger [law] library community. Make eye contact with people and smile. Internally, deliver something in person; telephone, rather than email. If you are in a large group gathering, get into conversation with one person. Get the person talking about herself. Have one or two "stock" questions prepared to start the conversation after you introduce yourself. Prepare a one-minute summary of who you are and what you do, if someone asks. Make connections by volunteering for professional associations.
- Join list serves, read SLAW, if at all possible go to local law librarian group meetings and CALL
- Research the type of connections who might be able to help you and try to make an initial contact with a friendly email. Chances are that one or more will respond.
- I strongly recommend joining a local law library group as a student. Membership is usually free, and I here in Calgary, we offer job shadows, lunch and learns, etc. Shadow at an academic law library, a courthouse library, a firm library -- everywhere that will have you, really -- as the day to day work is quite different, depending on the type of library. In Calgary, there is CLLG, in Ottawa there is NCALL. I am sure there are more.
- Smile.
- Learn to shake a person's hand who is new to you. Learn to start off with a few sentences of small talk as opener.
- Go to SLA events. You do not need to be a member to attend the local chapter events. Get involved with SLA student chapters. Join the local professional association. VALL, for example, is not expensive. You will meet professionals who already work in law libraries and they will remember you when they come across your resume because the community is small. Do informational interviews with practicing law librarians.
- Start by networking online. Comment on blog posts, ask questions through listservs or other channels.
- Join CALL and/or a regional law library association, TALL, VALL, MALL, etc. Attend the associations' events -- conferences, brown bag lunch sessions, etc.-- and make an effort to speak to other members there. Hand out your business card. Join CALL-L and monitor the posts. Consider replying to people's requests or information. Subscribe to SLAW, consider posting replies to SLAW posts.
- Keep trying!

- Join Associations and attend conferences. This helps build confidence
- Get your résumé ready and then get it to as many organizations as possible. Do this in person as often as possible. Contact the law library closest to you and ask for an appointment with the Librarian. Even if they do not have a job available, they may know of one elsewhere.
- Toastmasters.
- Networking is really just about being nice and being interested in what others have to say
- Join CALL
- For me it's easier when I never use the work networking. I think that I am interested in many aspects of work in libraries, and when I find someone who has any experience in these aspects I am naturally curious. This has led me to develop acquaintances who share my interests or challenge those interests a bit.
- Wine
- Go to library and industry events, smaller if you are more comfortable and remember that there is always someone who is more intimidated and retiring than you. Ask questions and be curious.

## WHAT ARE THE UNSPOKEN RULES OF BEING A NEW PROFESSIONAL IN THE WORLD OF CANADIAN LAW LIBRARIES?

- The unspoken rules - always act as the professional you are, even if things are not going well; remember that customer service is the most important aspect of the job. Always answer requests as timely and completely as possible - this is an asset when restructuring or budgeting issues occur.
- Always be honest and upfront about your level of experience, especially if you are nervous or feeling out of your comfort zone. And remember it's ok to ask a patron to rephrase, expand or give you more details about what they need assistance with. Never underestimate the power of a good reference interview, either. Sometimes patrons are asking for one thing, but actually they mean something entirely different, so don't be afraid to think outside the box, or to phone a librarian within your network for a second opinion.
- There is a lot of boundary setting that needs to happen in your first law library job. And the boundaries can be very different, depending on whether you work at a firm, or an academic library, or a courthouse library, etc. Build relationships with students and new hires in every way possible. You will never again have their attention the way you do when they still know they need your help, and that you have the answers. But once that relationship is established, they will continue to use you and the library, as they move up the associate ranks. It is almost impossible to get a lawyers attention, even if you are telling them how you will make their life easier. If you have an idea, you will often need to work very hard to conceive that idea, develop that idea, and then implement that idea on your own, especially if you are a solo librarian. - There is a steep learning curve in law librarianship, and we all know it. But it's just information like any other information. The key isn't knowing all the answers, it's knowing how to find them.
- You will learn on the job. Don't panic if you feel like you're thrown into the deep end right away. It takes between 6 and 18 months to really feel like you know what you're doing - that's normal and okay. Ask questions. Ask for help. Share your knowledge. Enjoy the learning process.
- Be bold and don't be afraid to try something new or different. Much of the old guard doesn't like change, but there are a lot of up and coming leaders who do value innovation, and they'll recognize your skills and talents.
- Listen. Offer new ideas in a constructive manner.
- When you get asked to complete some legal research that you have no idea what they are talking about, write down everything about the question and the go and "learn the law". Always ask when they need the information. Google is your friend, even in Law.
- Don't be afraid to admit what you don't know.
- It's ok to ask for help from law library colleagues (everyone is very helpful!).
- Balance openness and sharing with discretion. If you are dealing with vendors, many things remain confidential, but we also have to figure out when to share information as a professional unit. However, many research questions and organizing of content requires that strict privacy must be adhered to, especially where solicitor-client privilege is involved.

- Volunteer to help your local law library group. The fastest rising careers are often connected to individuals who offered to help (and coincidentally, network with others) early in their career timeline.
- Be willing to learn. Offer to share. Volunteer early and often.
- The library world is small, and the law library world is even smaller. Be polite, be professional, be friendly, do your best. Your reputation will get around. People may seem intimidating, but they're mostly friendly, and we rely on each other for help.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions and reach out to colleagues for help because information professionals are a generous and knowledgeable group of people! The listserv may become your best friend!
- This is probably not unspoken but be aware of what it's like to work in a corporate environment (stricter dress code than public and non-profit sectors) and also in a law firm. You will often be asked to work with very tight deadlines and you will feel overwhelmed until you learn the ins and outs of the job. Get good at working well under pressure. In terms of volume, law librarians are responsible for a large number of tasks including research, current awareness, training, and more. Manage your time and others' expectations well. Finally, be nice to everybody and be professional at work events.
- Keep networking! Keep volunteering! You're not done just because you got a job: help those that come after you. Be open to learning from people with more experience than you, BUT don't be afraid to change some things (just start small)!
- Early in your career, you will be a net consumer in the community. Try to give back where you can - respond to ILL requests, participate on committees and calls for volunteers. It will make the rest of us more inclined to be supportive when you need help.
- Ask whether they have a pension plan. Many private law libraries don't. You need to start putting in years into your pension as soon as you can. Government libraries treat you better than private law firms. Start with them as early as possible, if possible.
- Confidentiality. Whatever the environment you have landed in the business of the area is confidential. Sensitivity. If you show up a court and see someone you know, don't say "why are you here". The person may have a court case there and it just isn't your business.
- Be professional, be discreet in how you communicate
- Don't overreach your boundaries. If you provide a service that is lacking in some way it reflects on the library as a whole.
- Sign up for the CALL listserv. Help your colleagues. When you learn new things, keep notes so that you can go back and refer to them later.
- Try to join CALL/ACBD and attend the conferences (including the AGM) and subscribe to CALL-L, no matter the type of library you work in. Connect with others via LinkedIn or other means. Volunteer to do some writing, for example for CALL/ACBD and its blogs or publications. Show an interest in and

thought about policy matters, but do not get too political; understand views legitimately differ and people often are legitimately constrained or hold limited levels of comfort in political conversation, depending upon their positions.

- In the world of professionals...you are with formally trained people with university degrees. Speak at that level when speaking on work matters. Don't go into picky administrative situations: who cares about that stuff? Be graceful and listen to other experiences. Offer short observations of your own. Too much self-promotion of your skills becomes irritating to others who can see a behavioural pattern quickly. Be inclusive in your conversations, regardless of other person's rank/job title/experience.
- It is important to join CALL/ACBD. After you join, it is important to ask your employer to attend the conferences. Make a business case. If you are refused the first year, try again the next year. Look into the funding opportunities available through the association. In addition to attending the conferences, get involved in a SIG or committee. The law library community is a collaborative one. Do not hesitate to ask questions of CALL-eagues. Do not use the CALL-L listserv for inter-library loan inquiries until you have exhausted other avenues.
- You are the new kid on the block. Don't strut your knowledge (even if you have a lot). Listen actively, and learn. Always be courteous, even if someone is rude to you... there is always the chance that the next person might be kinder.
- Everyone is glad you chose to work in law libraries. Be an active association member and learner Find your cohort and share your challenges. Never be afraid to ask questions.
- You're not getting skills for the way law librarianship is now, you're getting skills for the way law librarianship will be in 30 years (if you'll be working that long, though as most getting into law librarianship are doing so as second careers, the profession will suffer from lack of skills amongst millennials).
- Learn as much as you can - not everything is online - ask lots of questions from experienced law librarians
- Not sure. I would think that any general etiquette rules for the workplace would apply. I would suggest being very cautious about social media use. I wouldn't write anything that you might regret later (even on a personal space).
- Every organization is different. There are no 'unspoken rules' of the profession as a whole. If you're in a new law library position, take a few months to a year to acclimate yourself to your role and organization. Figure out how you can make a difference to your organization or team. Take on extra projects and roles. Become known by the executives and managers in your organization.
- Veteran librarians are willing to help newbie's if they are approached in the right way, with respect and humility.
- There are already computers that do our jobs much more quickly and efficiently than we even have the capability of. One must adapt to this ever-changing environment and figure out ways that humans can provide better service than machines as this only becomes more and truer.

- Everyone in the CALL community is pretty friendly!
- I'm not sure. I guess I'd reiterate my comment above about not saying you became a librarian because you couldn't find a job in another field, or because you couldn't figure out what else to do.

## **ANY ADDITIONAL COMMENTS OR ADVICE YOU WOULD LIKE TO PASS ON?**

- Adopt an attitude of continuous learning. Read and ask questions to improve your knowledge of law and of librarianship. There are no stupid questions where you are sincerely trying to find out more. Lawyers are usually happy to explain to you why they are asking the question. If you do not know the answer to a question a user asks you, admit you do not have the answer to hand, but state you will find out right away - and do so. People are important - do not neglect the networking.
- Don't be too hard on yourself, be focused and patient - the right opportunity will come along. The harder you work, the luckier you will be
- Know that the new ideas are welcomed from new graduates and this is an exciting field.
- Don't take yourself so seriously all the time. Also any criticism you receive related to improvement/job, don't take it personally. It won't help you when you deal with strong personalities among lawyers and judges.
- Know what you know. If you are unsure, then admit that you are unsure. In other words, qualify your response. Offer the best service you can. If there is something you can do to supplement or upgrade your response, then do it or at least ask the lawyer if it's something he/she would like to have you investigate. Learn as much about your customer (lawyers) as you can. It's the only way to offer better service. I believe in the 'anticipatory service model' i.e. keeping the lawyer abreast of what's new in his/her field is more important than just waiting for a question to materialize. Read law blogs daily. Stay ahead of what's going.
- You never know when someone is going to be in a position to help you get a job, let as many people know you are looking as possible.
- Get out and visit the libraries in your community. You can make appointments to talk with librarians in your community.
- You are welcome here.
- As a 'newbie' it is a great idea to attend everything you can, because your face will become familiar to individuals and the group. Keep smiling and make good eye contact where possible. Show an eagerness to learn.
- Best advice I ever received was don't be afraid of taking contracts - this gains you the skills needed and increases the depth of experience you bring when you do finally go for the full time job (also getting harder to find)
- CALL will let you do stuff your employer might not early in your career. Share your ideas and chances are you will find yourself in a leadership position sooner than you thought. Follow through on your commitments.
- Participate in a mentorship program, like the one offered at CALL/ACBD. If you aren't interested in a formal mentorship relationship, don't be afraid to ask for career advice or work-related advice from your network.



- Don't complain about a previous position in an interview. Make up a positive reason why you are leaving. Also, don't put up with a difficult manager - start planning your move, and it's OK to do so in 1-2 years.
- My last comments may not seem very positive, but I think they are important to keep in mind. When wanting to be a law librarian, remember that there aren't actually that many law libraries in Canada (compared to the United States), and a person will more than likely have to be willing to move. There are lots of law libraries in major cities such as Toronto and Vancouver, but if you don't want to live in a major city, it will be hard to get a law library job. And if you want to work in an academic law library, remember that there are only about 23 law schools in Canada (and if you don't speak French, there are only 15 you can work at), and they are all cutting back on the number of law librarians they employ. You may want to look in the United States for academic law library jobs if that is the area you wish to work in. That being said, you can have a great career in law libraries if you find the right place for you. I would recommend going in with your eyes wide open, though.
- At this point, with a 3.0 GPA from a learning disability caught too late, I am looking at paying down my student loan, getting a graduate degree, then getting an MLIS degree after that. With said debt loads, there should be a set limit on MLIS programs accepting folks wanting this as a second career. The nursing schools eliminated slots in the 1990s when nursing positions were eliminated, only to find out there was a vast shortage 10 years later, due to poor planning and demographics. Don't do that, too.
- Again, join a law library association. Volunteer for an entry level association position, e.g. to serve on a special interest group. Show you can do the job, that you are reliable and committed. Other offers, of increasing responsibility, will follow as you establish your track record.
- Don't forget this CALL publication: Annette Demers, ed. Legal Information Specialists: A Guide to Launching and Building Your Career, (Lexis Nexis, 2012.)