RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Research aims
The research aimed to improve understanding of current and emerging roles in electronic information environments in order to:
- Reveal the extent of career opportunities for information specialists in the wider information environment (i.e. beyond the boundaries of “traditional” information work)
- Uncover real evidence that can be used to generate higher interest in MI and IM as an attractive option for study, and employment
- Influence University course/programme design and delivery so that graduates who enter the information job market are adequately prepared for employment
- Build bridges with key stakeholders in the wider electronic environment

Research questions
What is the nature of the e-information role market place, and e-information roles?
Which sectors offer the greatest potential for a career in e-information employment growth?
What are the major drivers for the creation of new e-information roles?
How might universities prepare graduates for employment in e-information roles?

RESEARCH DESIGN

Data collection activities
- Desk research: literature search and review; analysis of TFPL recruitment placements; analysis of job advertisements
- Internal consultation: TFPL internal discussion/brainstorming, including consultation with networking group members (such as the Bath Club)
- External consultation: survey of key informants; interviews; group discussions of preliminary findings

Set | Date | Activity | Data subjects | Scope
--- | --- | --- | --- | ---
1 | March 2006 | Internal (TFPL) consultations | TFPL advisors, recruitment staff, Bath Club (120) | Series of 6 meetings held in London
2 | March 2006 | Analysis of job data | Internal & external job ads | Mainly UK
3 | May 2006 | Web-based survey | Information specialists (42) | Mainly UK
4 | May 2006 | Focus group | Information specialists (12) | Glasgow
5 | May 2006 | Interviews | Sub-set of survey respondents (16) | Europe and USA
6 | June 14 2006 | Feedback seminar | Information specialists (22) | London

MAIN FINDINGS

Nature of the e-information job market
- Developed and diffuse
- Exhibits particular flavours according to industry
- Recent growth in information analysis, project management and information architecture roles
- Greater opportunity in the public and voluntary sectors

Functions of current e-information roles
- Acquisition and collection management of electronic resources
- Editing electronic content
- Information governance
- Provision of access to electronic information content, e.g. portal development
- Information analysis
- Creation/origination of electronic content
- End-user support in the deployment of electronic sources

Skills requirements
- Core IM skills, especially those relevant to building information architecture and managing content
- General IT literacy
- Core personal attributes, e.g. flexibility, confidence, enthusiasm
- Certain skills combinations in demand, e.g. project management plus awareness of electronic publishing

EXTENDING THE REACH

Career opportunities
- Variety in career opportunities, especially in the private sector
- New legislation and related to the efficiency agenda, relocation of government services from the centre, and the transformational government programmes

Accessing the opportunities
- Seek out opportunities advertised across a range of media
- Keep up to date with hot topics of concern to target employers
- Provide clear demonstrations of suitability in applications for posts

Key messages for bodies
- Need for training provision in particular applications of e-information roles
- Need for development of skills, particularly in the new graduate population: core IM skills, basic skills for the work place, especially IT literacy; core personal attributes

FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information, please contact:
Dr Hazel Hall, Napier University, UK
Angela Abell, TFPL Ltd, UK
h.hall@napier.ac.uk
angela.abell@tfpl.com