Tools for future-proofing your library career

Janis McKenzie, Simon Fraser University
Anne Olsen, Vancouver Public Library
Overview

- What does a “future-proof” career look like?

- Quick tips and tricks for “future-proofing”:
  - Introduction to a couple of quick futuring techniques, and time to practice
Change isn’t new.

“Skate where the puck’s going, not where it’s been.”

—Wayne Gretzky

Picture source: http://www.vintagecardprices.com/
“Skate where the puck’s going, not where it’s been.”

—Wayne Gretzky
Start with looking one step ahead. (or at least at the present.)
Postings snapshot
The Partnership – 20 April 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Title</th>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Start Date</th>
<th>Expiry Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Librarian</td>
<td>Mental Health Centre Penetanguishene</td>
<td>Penetanguishene, ON</td>
<td>4/10/2010</td>
<td>4/30/2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Digitization Librarian/Archivist (Term, 2 years from the date of hire)</td>
<td>University of British Columbia</td>
<td>Vancouver, BC</td>
<td>4/15/2010</td>
<td>5/21/2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Services Librarian</td>
<td>Okanagan Regional Library</td>
<td>Salmon Arm, BC</td>
<td>4/15/2010</td>
<td>5/15/2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digitization Facilitator/Animateur en numérisation (Extended / Prolongé)</td>
<td>Knowledge Ontario</td>
<td>West Nipissing &amp; Clarence-Rockland regions, ON</td>
<td>4/7/2010</td>
<td>4/22/2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPS – Research Centre Technician</td>
<td>PwC Management Services LP</td>
<td>Vancouver, BC</td>
<td>4/14/2010</td>
<td>7/13/2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members' Services Research Assistant</td>
<td>Saskatchewan Legislative Library</td>
<td>Regina, SK</td>
<td>4/14/2010</td>
<td>4/29/2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section Head, Seven Oaks Hospital Library</td>
<td>University of Manitoba</td>
<td>Winnipeg, MB</td>
<td>4/14/2010</td>
<td>5/21/2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KNOWLEDGE RESOURCE SPECIALIST</td>
<td>Saskatchewan Research Council</td>
<td>Saskatoon, SK</td>
<td>4/13/2010</td>
<td>4/26/2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Librarian (Summer position)</td>
<td>Nunavut Arctic College</td>
<td>Iqaluit, NU</td>
<td>4/9/2010</td>
<td>4/30/2010</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Academic postings snapshot
ALA JobList - 20 April 2010

Access Services Librarian
Pittsburg State University, Pittsburg, Kansas
Salary Category: Not Specified
Deadline: 05/30/2010 Posted: 04/20/2010
Organization Type: Academic/Research (College/University)
Categories: Access Services/Circulation

Assistant Professor, OSU Library, Digital Library Services
Oklahoma State University Library, Stillwater, Oklahoma
Salary Category: $25,000 - $49,999
The Future.

Web Images Videos Maps News Books Gmail more ▼ Search settings | Sign in

Google library future
Search: ☑ the web □ pages from Canada

Results 1 - 10 of about 226,000,000 for library future. (0.27 seconds)

Video results for library future

**Libraries of the Future** - What does the academic library of the...
What does the academic library of the future look like? Where do its walls begin and end? On campus? On our desktop? At home? Does it still have a function ...

**Digital Mathematics Library: A Vision for the Future**
File Format: PDF/Adobe Acrobat - Quick View
Proud. We can leave no better gift for future generations than a digital mathematical library of the past. Draft: 5.3, 24 March 2006.

**Vanier Institute of the Family -- Virtual Library - The Future**
Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication: Bibby, Reginald W. (Reginald Wayne), date. The future families project: a survey of Canadian ...

**LIBRARIES WITHOUT WALLS: BLUEPRINT FOR THE FUTURE** Report of a...
File Format: PDF/Adobe Acrobat - Quick View
The future of health sciences libraries promises to be an exciting one of ...... required in the technologically based future for library and information ...

**Future library's 'teen zone' gets boost | Fort Frances Times Online**
By Peggy Rewell Staff writer The new Fort Frances Library Public Library and Technology Centre received another funding boost last week thanks to the Royal ...

**Libraries of the Future**
The majority of our libraries have responded to this but many have done this in a bolt-on way and there is more that we can do. The Future Library Space ...
Your Future in 5 Easy Steps: Wired Guide to Personal Scenario Planning

Wired magazine: issue 17.08
The Future.
A Few Futuring Techniques

- **Scanning** (focussing on changes and trends)
- **Trend projection** (what if a given trend continues at current rate?)
- **Scenarios** (possible future developments described in story or outline form)
- **Brainstorming** (useful in identifying possibilities, opportunities, and risks)
- **Backcasting** (once a future goal is determined, identify what sequence of events is required to achieve it)
- **Wild cards** (the big surprises, both good and bad, that can knock us sideways)

Scenarios

Example: Future of reference services in the X University Library

1. Surprise-free scenario: For example, reference desk stats fall gradually while online use increases
2. Optimistic scenario: Extra funding for special projects increase support to online reference service.
3. Pessimistic scenario: The division’s budget is drastically reduced. Service hours and some services are cut.
4. Disaster scenario: The division or branch is eliminated.
5. Transformation (“miracle”) scenario: Large donation or grant awarded.

Wild cards

- Often discussed in terms of large-scale disasters
- Can be positive or negative
- Can be personal too

Group futuring exercise

- Choose a topic, e.g.:
  - Collections
  - Reference/information services
  - Outreach
  - Programming
  - Liaison services
  - Marketing
  - Technical services
  - Library buildings and facilities

- Choose a futuring technique, e.g.:
  - Trend projection
  - Scenarios
  - Brainstorming
  - Backcasting
  - Wild cards
Checking back

- Topic?
- Tool?
- What possible futures?
- What surprises?
In conclusion

“Future-proofing” your career:

- A range of ongoing activities
- Current awareness and engagement
- Reflective thought
  - What’s the big picture?
  - What are the trends?
  - What are some possible futures?
  - What actions are required?
- Action steps
Career Sustainability:

Strategies and tools for future-proofing your library career

Janis McKenzie, Simon Fraser University
Anne Olsen, Vancouver Public Library

janis_mckenzie@sfu.ca
anne.olsen@vpl.ca