

Changing Nature of Cataloguing Librarians in Academic Libraries

Haiyun Cao, Metadata, Discovery and Access Librarian; Marcia Salmon, Digital Scholarship Metadata Librarian, York University Libraries

ABSTRACT

The shifting research and scholarly landscape, the transformation in higher education, and advances in technology have been reshaping the profession of cataloguing librarianship in academic settings. There has been a trend in the cataloguing community that cataloguers are transforming their roles from traditional cataloguing into metadata creation. The authors of this research study conducted a survey to cataloguers in Canadian and American academic libraries who experienced this change in roles. The survey addresses changes of position description, acquisition of new skills, challenges and opportunities during the transition, and their extent of confidence and satisfaction to perform the new roles. The Survey result shows transition in the job roles of cataloguers is a big challenge to cataloguers who lack metadata knowledge and computer technologies. However, they are able to acquire the needed skills to perform their new responsibility, as well as develop certain confidence and satisfaction in their new role.

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF RESEARCH

Recently, many academic libraries have under-gone an organizational restructuring process. This study examines changes in the role of metadata specialists and cataloguers in academic libraries post restructuring.

There has been a trend in the cataloguing community that cataloguers are transforming their roles from traditional cataloguing into metadata creation. The researchers would like to conduct a survey of cataloguers working in American and Canadian universities and colleges to explore new and emerging roles in metadata services.

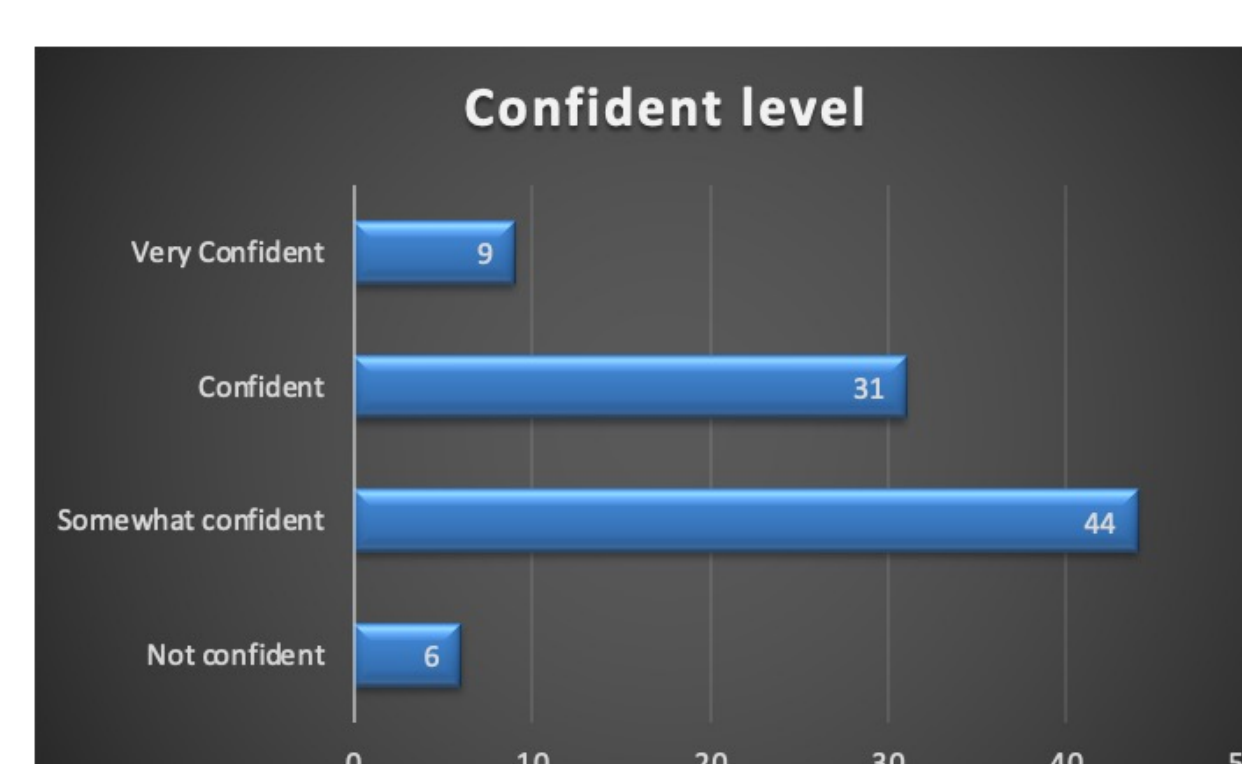
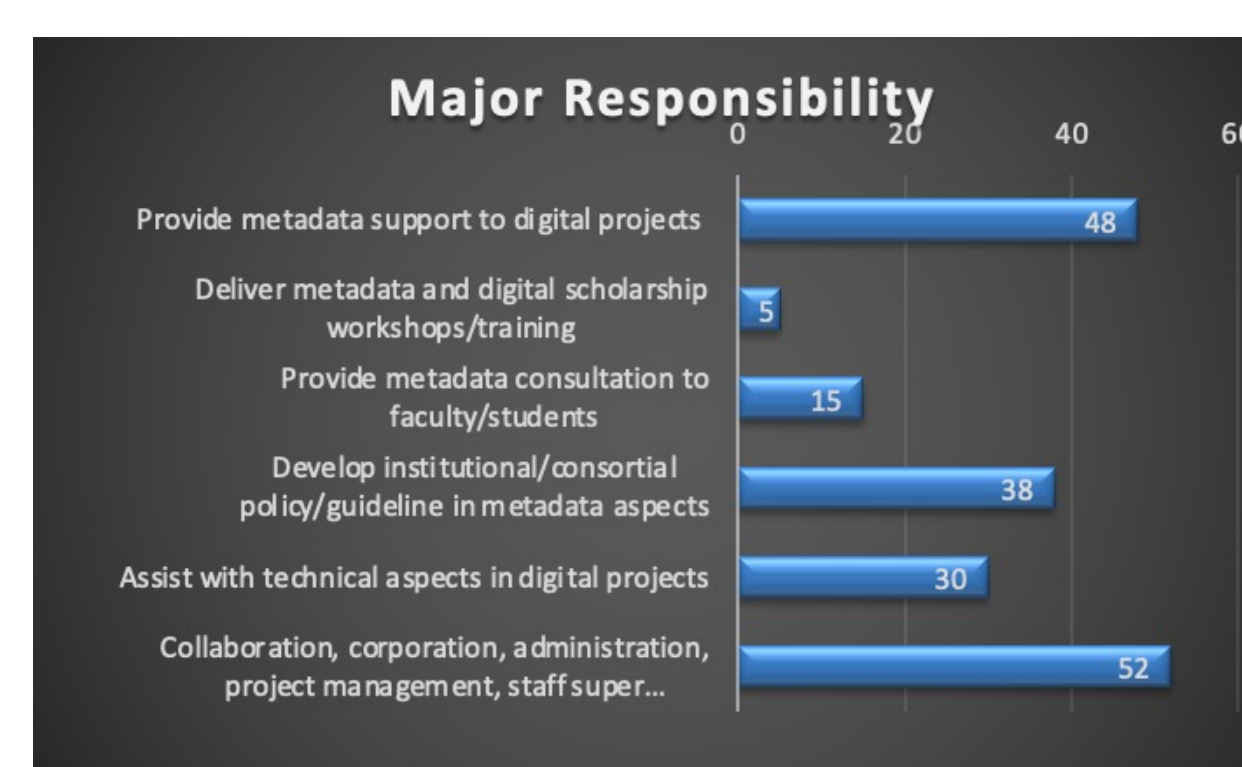
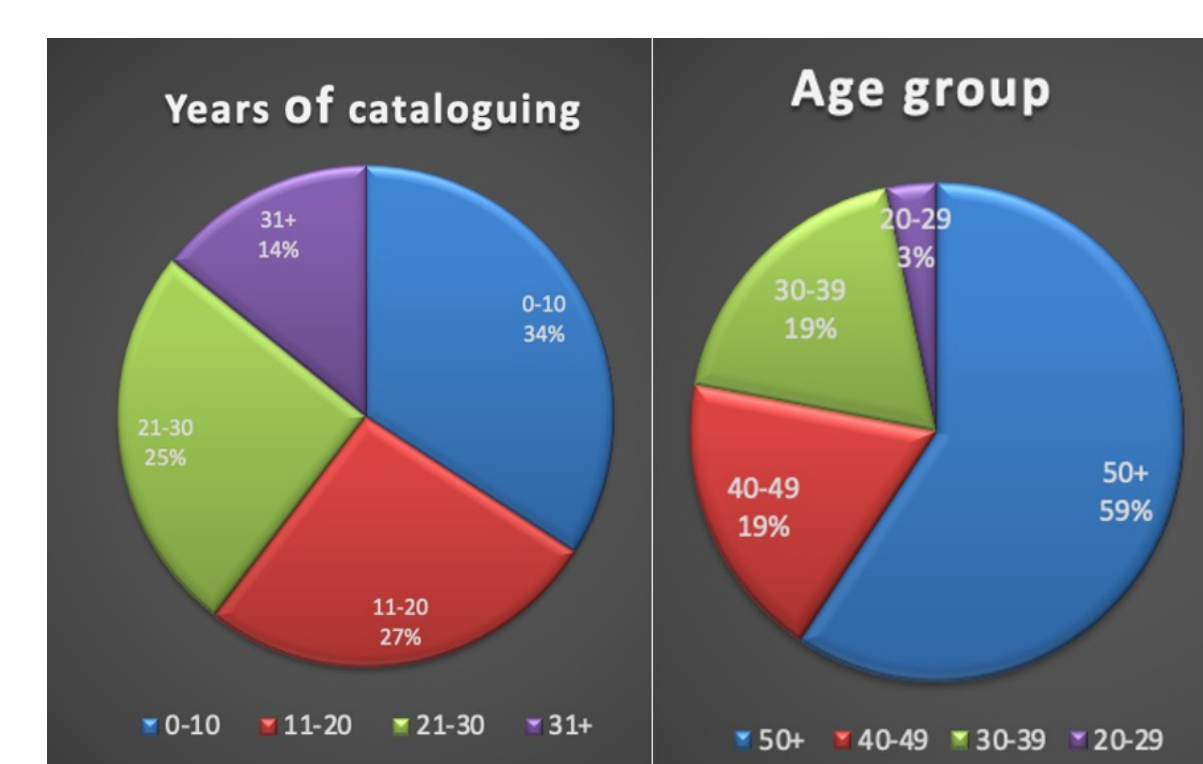
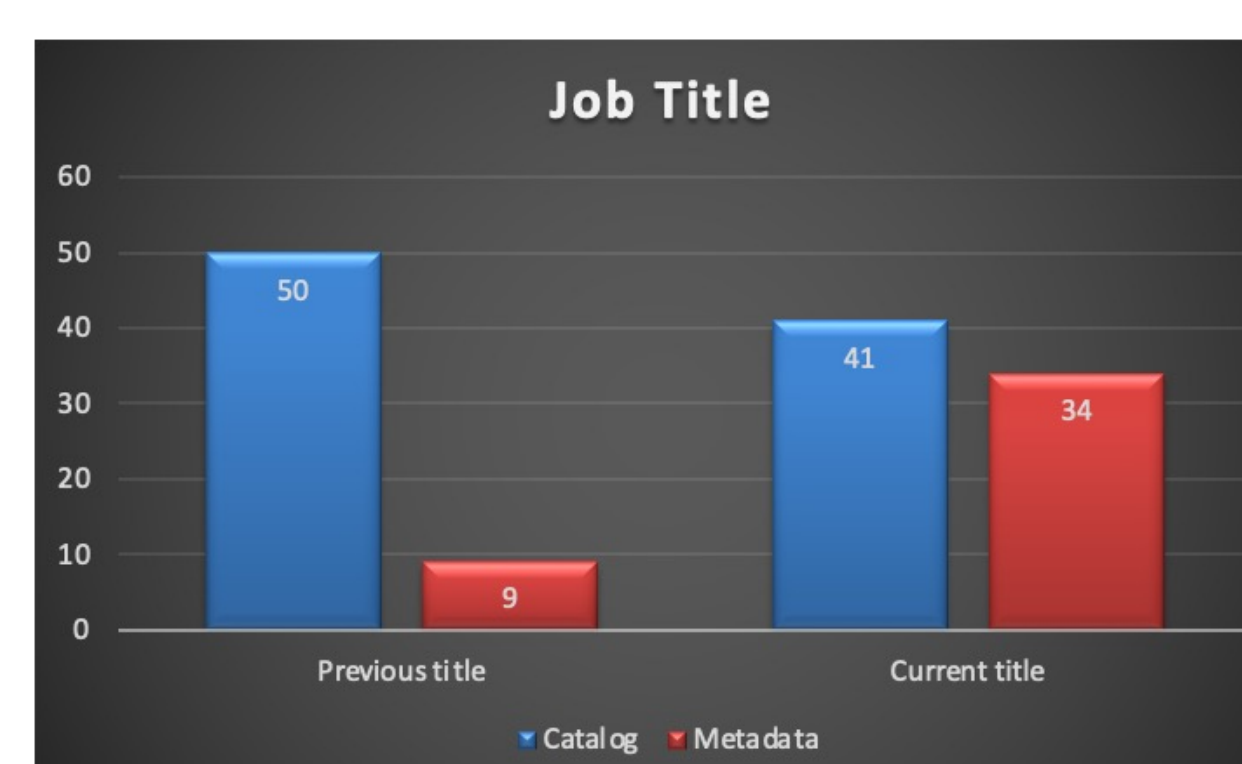
LITERATURE REVIEW

- The changing nature of cataloguing positions is not a new or emerging area of research.
- El-Sherbini and Klim (1997) article discussed how outsourcing of cataloguing to vendors services and the use of paraprofessional staff is changing the role of cataloguers.
- The article by Buttlar and Garcha (1998) examined the results of a survey of cataloguers in the American Library Association Technical Services Division. The themes that emerged from this survey were how outsourcing of cataloguing to vendors, a change from print to electronic, paraprofessionals taking on increasingly higher levels of cataloguing were changing the role of the cataloguing librarian. Cataloguing librarians were cataloguing specialized material such as audio-visual and digital documents in addition to task such as database maintenance and selecting and implementing catalogue products.
- Chapman, J (2007) describes the role of the metadata librarian in research libraries in terms of collaboration, research, education, and development.
- In the paper by Park, J., Lu, C., & Marion, L. (2009) a content analysis of cataloguing position descriptions posted on the AUTOCAT listserv in 2005-2006 were analyzed. This study showed that skills such as electronic resource management, metadata creation, computer and Web applications, bibliographic and authority control, integrated library-system management and management of cataloguing function are some of the skills required of cataloguing professionals in a digital environment.

METHODOLOGY

- A survey with 13 questions was created to ask mainly Canadian and American Academic Cataloguers about changes in position descriptions and new skills acquisition in their jobs.
- Human Participants Ethics Approval was gained from York University.
- The York University Libraries institutional subscriptions of MachForms were used to create the online survey.
- The online survey was sent to technical service email lists in both Canada and the USA. The specific listservs were: AUTOCAT, Metadata librarians and the Canadian Technical Services Librarian Google Group
- The online survey was available for six weeks from April 1, 2021 to May 15, 2021.

RESULTS



CONCLUSIONS

- New responsibility for Metadata services are in addition to cataloguing responsibility.
- Majority of the participants are in their mid or senior age and have been as cataloguers for more than 10 years.
- The most sought-after new skill and biggest challenge for their new role except knowledge of metadata is computer programming.
- The major avenues for acquiring new skills are self-taught or pursuing external professional development opportunities, rather than training or support within libraries/institutions.
- Even though the challenge, most participants feel somehow confident and satisfied about their new roles.