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WebJunction Competency Index for the Library Field: a learning foundation in times of change

By Kathleen Gesinger, Partner Services Consultant & Training Specialist
OCLC | WebJunction.org



Across industries, competencies provide a foundation on which to build coherent efforts to increase the knowledge, skills and abilities of employees and ultimately to strengthen the organization as a whole. Libraries need such a foundation, especially in times of rapid change and evolution, in order to choose the most efficient and productive paths for staff training, recruiting and other personnel directions. In an effort to fulfill that need, in 2009 WebJunction created the *Competency Index for the Library Field* as a compilation of competency statements that address a broad spectrum of library practice and service.

A host of the primary competencies sets were consulted, aggregated and synthesized for the Index, and subject matter experts reviewed and informed revisions of the final document. Given the variety of library size and type, competencies by work roles and classifications were not defined. Instead, WebJunction offers a menu of categories and competencies from which an individual or library can select and combine to meet their particular needs and structures.

Betha Gutsche, who has been a WebJunction staffer since 2005 and is currently the program manager for the Project Compass initiative, was the compiler and editor of the Competency Index. In an article published in the March 2010 issue of *Library Journal*, Betha reflected:

Building competency-based approaches to professional education, hiring and recruiting, staff training, or performance management is akin to working with LEGOs™. There is no definitive competency construction that will fit all types and sizes of library. Every construction will differ, customized to the unique needs of each institution. Using competency categories and statements as building blocks allows many different combinations tailored to the particular application and organization.

The Competency Index for the Library Field is intended to be a modified faceted classification. It is a catalog of items that can be mixed and matched. When writing a job description for a new hire or a learning plan for a current employee, consider the full range of knowledge, skills, behavior, and attitudes that would make this person most successful. Just about every position will include some personal/interpersonal competencies.

WebJunction intends for the Index to be a compilation from which a wide variety of libraries can build competency sets to meet their individual needs. You are invited to download the Index as a PDF file (1.85 MB) to distribute widely, or as a MS Word file to remix, and repurpose as you see fit.

Link to the full Library Journal article - <http://www.libraryjournal.com/article/CA6719414.html>

Link to the competency index –
<http://www.webjunction.org/competencies/-/articles/content/67024491>
<http://oh.webjunction.org/competencies/-/articles/content/67024491>