The role of the librarian is undergoing profound transformation. Some people are predicting the demise of the profession altogether as publications go digital and information goes online. Their thinking is, “Who needs a librarian when you have Google?”

Well, the profession may be in the throes of change, but to paraphrase the famous quote, those death reports are greatly exaggerated! The need for library science skills are greater than ever.

Librarian responsibilities like reference and research, classification and cataloguing and outreach are evolving. Meanwhile new roles are being added as we move to the age of Library as a Service.

That’s the reason LAC Group is publishing a series of booklets for LIS and MLIS students and graduates. As a leader in the business of libraries, organizations from law firms to corporations to the venerable Library of Congress turn to us for solutions to their knowledge and information challenges.

Each booklet will focus on a topic related to those needs and opportunities. Our wish is to help guide you to a more fulfilling, rewarding career path based on employer needs, market demands and coming trends.

We hope you heed our advice to help us modernize the role of “library” and “librarian” – more than ever, the world needs your energy, creativity and information know-how.
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What is Competitive Intelligence?

**Competitive Intelligence (CI) –**

*Ethical gathering, analysis and presentation of information in the process of monitoring business rivals. Primarily used in marketing and business development.*

The concept of making decisions based on competitor information has been around as long as humans have engaged in commercial activity. With the growing volume and complexity of information and the need for trend-spotting and predictive analysis, the process has been elevated to *intelligence*.

**Competitive Intelligence supports decision-making on three fronts:**

- **STRATEGIC:** Support for product development, branding, new markets and other strategic decisions.
- **TACTICAL:** Information to guide campaigns, incorporate in presentations and respond to competitor actions.
- **COUNTER INTELLIGENCE:** Important in businesses that depend on patents and other “secrets” or simply to defend market share and retain key clients.

CI dives deep into the pool of public information for insights and facts on rival businesses, shifting markets, economic indicators, regulations and other factors that might alter the competitive landscape or lead to innovative new solutions and approaches.
What is the Opportunity for LIS and MILS Graduates?

Competitive Intelligence is recognized as a growing career opportunity, included in many “Best Jobs for the Future” lists.

Globalization, technology, increasing entrepreneurism and other factors are contributing to more dynamic, competitive markets. Yet perhaps nothing is driving Competitive Intelligence more greatly than the explosion and reach of digital information, both ‘hard’ sources like transactional data and ‘soft’ sources like social media.

With all this digital data comes the need to sift through it, organize it, analyze it, present it and discover the insights within. People with Library Science training and discipline are uniquely positioned to fill the needs and leverage this opportunity!

About Competitive Intelligence Jobs

Competitive Intelligence is needed in corporations and other commercial entities like law firms.

The function may go to market research professionals in the marketing department. Law firms tend to rely on the law librarian. Other businesses may rely on data analysts within the IT or IS department. With the advent of Sales Force Automation (SFA) and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) technology, the sales department gets involved as well.

Competitive versus Business Intelligence

*Competitive Intelligence is the mining of external information related to rivals and markets. Business Intelligence is the mining of an organization’s internal information and operational data.*
Competitive Intelligence Job Titles

Often times “Competitive Intelligence” or at least “Intelligence” will be included as part of the job title, particularly when the responsibilities lie solely in that arena; sometimes the position will include other types of research and information-related responsibilities.

Job titles might be something like:

- Competitive Intelligence Analyst
- Market Intelligence or Market Research Analyst
- Research Associate

Some organizations may have narrower, more specialized research roles within a bigger team:

- Intellectual Property (IP) Research
- Product Research
- Subject Matter Experts (e.g., particular industries)
- Threat Intelligence Analyst
- Social Media and Analytics Specialist

Typical CI Responsibilities

Entry to Mid-Level Positions:

- Monitor, analyze and package insights on competitor strategy, including products, markets and marketing tactics.
- Access, retrieve, populate, update and maintain data from a variety of systems and databases.
- Identify resources and information needed to meet requests.
- Support daily preparation and distribution of a variety of reports, briefings, alerts and other deliverables.
- Conduct metadata tagging and other organizing and classifying of information for search.
- Support ad hoc requests and other responsibilities.
Director Level Positions:

- Define mission and vision for CI team, directing processes and best practices and adapting requirements as needs change.
- Demonstrate thought leadership and subject matter expertise.
- Recruit, hire, lead and motivate staff, communicating a clear vision of goals and objectives and how to achieve them.
- Help develop long-range strategies, including contributions to strategy sessions and budget planning efforts. Serve as trusted advisor to Corporate Strategy and Executive Leadership.
- Evaluate and select CI systems and tools, evaluate vendors, manage budgets and vendor relationships.
- Keep abreast of developments and best practices in CI field.

Required Skills, Experience and Education

- Relevant Business or Information Bachelor’s degree; MLIS or other advanced degrees a plus and sometimes a necessity.
- Experience in advanced analytics such as Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), dashboards, visualizations, predictive analysis and data mining.
- Ability to work with large data sets, derive clear insights, generate innovative solutions and summarize information.
- Strong interpersonal skills and the ability to collaborate with all levels of an organization.
- Strong organizational skills with ability to manage multiple projects and details simultaneously.
- Excellent written and oral communication skills.
- Proficient information technology skills including Microsoft Office, email, database services and search applications.
Compensation

Salaries can vary widely, depending on industry, seniority, experience, location and other factors.

**MANAGEMENT DIRECTORS**
Salaries Range

- Average salary for Competitive Intelligence Director: $102K
- Salaries Range: $84K - $136K

**ANALYST**
Salaries Range

- Average salary for Competitive Intelligence Analyst: $79K
- Salaries Range: $32K - $110K

(Sources: Indeed.com, Glassdoor.com)
Day in the Life

STEVEN MEDLEY
is a Business Intelligence Analyst for LAC Group, on assignment at an AmLaw 200 firm based in Los Angeles.

Following is how he describes a typical work day:

My day begins checking e-mail and phone messages for issues or requests. I may respond myself or if it’s a “Deep-Dive” project I’ll assign it to the best resource and act as project manager.

I review industry blogs and alerts daily, looking for stories that may impact the firm or its clients, like information related to a practice group, litigation news or changes to firm rankings.

Since I am in the library, I also have responsibility for resource management and reference shifts. Information resources are a big part of a firm’s budget, and firms are increasingly cost-conscious, so it’s important to monitor usage and negotiate the best terms.

I work closely with Marketing and Business Development staff. When the firm is responding to a proposal, I help prepare background information and discover any angle that could give the team a competitive advantage.

I find my work interesting and challenging, with something different every day. And I take pride knowing my efforts contribute to the firm’s success.
Jumpstart Your Competitive Intelligence Career

• Focus on coursework and programs in Competitive Intelligence, Market Research and other relevant topics.
• Explore opportunities for internships, freelance or volunteer market research projects and other CI-related work.
• Join a relevant association and get involved. (See list below)
• Find ways to specialize and grow your understanding of areas like marketing, social media, key industries and niche markets.

Professional CI Associations

The following professional associations offer affordable student memberships and valuable options for learning and networking with other CI professionals (and potential employers):

SCIP – Strategic and Competitive Intelligence Professionals
www.scip.org

LMA – Legal Marketing Association
www.legalmarketing.org

SLA – Special Libraries Association
www.sla.org
We offer these final tips for LIS and MILS students and graduates who are interested in a Competitive Intelligence career:

• Become business-savvy and industry-savvy and don’t be timid about sharing your knowledge.

• Understand the players, issues, trends, threats and regulations within your selected industry and markets.

• Contribute your own relevant topics and ideas with context as to how and why it matters.

• Consider the best ways to analyze, synthesize and present information for maximum clarity and insights.

With search engines and other digital information technologies enabling people to conduct their own research, it’s no longer enough to provide a “data dump” – it’s important for the modern librarian and CI professional to transform information into actionable intelligence.
MLIS and LIS Careers Resource Series

This is an exciting time to be a librarian and information professional, where jobs now span a wide range of environments, both physical and digital.

The following career resource guides describe new and challenging career opportunities for MLIS and LIS graduates and alumni.

1. COMPETITIVE INTELLIGENCE
2. CURATION AND ARCHIVAL
3. KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT
4. BIG DATA MANAGEMENT

🌟 LANDING JOB WITH LIS/MLIS DEGREE

MLIS and LIS Career Resources

LibGig is the #1 job site for information professionals, offering jobs, interview tips, resume help and much more. It’s a place to connect with employers and network with other information professionals. Established in 2008, LibGig has earned its reputation as a proven leader in the information professionals community.

www.libgig.com

LAC Group, a leader in Information Curation and Knowledge Management℠, offers comprehensive services to help organizations maximize the utility of real-time and archival information. A certified woman-owned business established in 1986, LAC Group is a trusted choice of government agencies, Fortune 500 companies, law firms, major media concerns and universities seeking to manage their ever-increasing information and knowledge management challenges.

www.lac-group.com

To receive other career resource guides in this series, contact your university’s career service center or visit www.lac-group.com/library-career-guides