

Article

Perspectives on the training and work of librarians in commercial book publishing

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Abstract: This is a study of the publishing market focusing on the possibilities for librarians and the skills acquired during their education. The aim was to outline the competencies and skills described in the literature on librarian training and what is required in national and international job vacancies for this role. The importance of this research is justified by the observation that librarians are still little recognised and sought after by the commercial publishing market. For this study, we used a literature review research, in which the authors were able to rely on scholars in the field and an exploratory process to select vacancies that supported our observations. Finally, we conclude that the commercial publishing market does not yet absorb information professionals, and that when this occurs, there is a preference for professionals who have continuing education and specialise in the segment. The results also pointed to the affinity between librarian education and the requirements mentioned in the job vacancies, reaffirming that this is a segment with outstanding professional opportunities. The research also revealed a correlation between the competencies and skills identified in the educational literature and the requirements for these vacancies.

Keywords: Publishing industry; Librarian – Professional activity; Librarian – Education.

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Perspectivas sobre a formação e atuação de bibliotecários na área de editoração comercial de livros

Resumo: Trata-se de uma pesquisa sobre o mercado no ramo editorial, focada nas possibilidades de atuação do bibliotecário e as habilidades adquiridas ao longo de sua formação. Objetivou-se delinear as competências e habilidades expressas na literatura sobre formação e o que vem sendo solicitado por vagas nacionais e internacionais. A importância dessa pesquisa se justifica ao observar que o bibliotecário ainda é um profissional pouco reconhecido e requisitado pelo mercado editorial comercial. Para esse estudo, utilizou-se o processo de revisão de literatura, em que os autores puderam apoiar-se nos estudiosos da área e pesquisa exploratória, para seleção de vagas que sustentassem o observado. Por fim, conclui que o mercado editorial comercial ainda não absorve os profissionais da informação, e que quando isso ocorre há uma predileção pelos profissionais que detenham de uma formação continuada; especializando-se no segmento. Resultados ainda apontaram a afinidade entre a formação do bibliotecário e os requisitos mencionados nas vagas, reafirmando que este é um segmento com proeminente possibilidade de atuação profissional. Foi possível, ainda, a partir da pesquisa, uma correlação entre competências e habilidades identificadas na literatura sobre educação que está aderente àquelas demandas pelas vagas.

Palavras-chave: Indústria editorial; Bibliotecário – Atuação profissional; Bibliotecário – Formação profissional.

Perspectivas sobre la formación y actuación de bibliotecarios en el ámbito de la edición comercial de libros

Resumen: Se trata de una investigación sobre el mercado en el sector editorial, centrada en las posibilidades de actuación del bibliotecario y las habilidades adquiridas a lo largo de su formación. El objetivo era definir las competencias y habilidades descritas en la bibliografía sobre la formación del bibliotecario y los requisitos que se exigen en las ofertas de empleo nacionales e internacionales relacionadas con este puesto. La importancia de esta investigación se justifica al observar que el bibliotecario sigue siendo un profesional poco reconocido y solicitado por el mercado editorial comercial. Para este estudio, se utilizó revisión de la literatura, en el que los autores pudieron apoyarse en los estudiosos del área y en el proceso exploratorio, para seleccionar las vacantes que respaldaron lo observado. Por último, se concluye que el mercado editorial comercial aún no absorbe a los profesionales de la información y que, cuando esto ocurre, se da preferencia a los profesionales que cuentan con una formación continua y se especializan en el segmento. Los resultados también señalaron la afinidad entre la formación del bibliotecario y los requisitos mencionados en las vacantes, lo que reafirma que este es un segmento con una notable posibilidad de actuación profesional. Además, a partir de la investigación, se pudo establecer una correlación entre las competencias y habilidades identificadas en la bibliografía sobre educación y las exigencias de los puestos de trabajo.

Palabras-clave: Industria editorial; Bibliotecario – Actuación profesional; Bibliotecario – Formación profesional.

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1 Introduction

From a historical perspective, the role of the librarian, even before its institutionalisation and professionalisation, predates the emergence of publishing houses and the publishing market, and even predates the printing press itself. It was only with the intervention of Gutenberg's printing press in the 15th century that publishing began its evolution in the West, culminating in what is known today as the complex and highly

lucrative publishing sector; an industry that involves both tangible and intangible stages of production within a global supply chain, encompassing various productive sectors (McNeely; Wolverton, 2008).

According to a report by the International Publishers Association and the World Intellectual Property Organization (2022), the “global publishing industry” generated, in 2021 alone, around 71.6 billion dollars across 23 countries, with printed books continuing to dominate over digital formats. Brazil, for example, has the largest publishing industry in Latin America, with around 3,000 publishers of varying sizes and 15,000 printing houses, mostly concentrated in the Rio-São Paulo corridor (Couto, 2006).

It is clear that there is certainly scope for librarians to play a role in the publishing industry; however, there is a gap to be filled. This gap is of interest to us in view of an emerging sector; to this end, this article was written with the aim of facilitating the integration of librarians into the sector. It was found that in publishing houses, professionals from other fields perform functions relevant to librarians and that in Brazil, their role in publishing is strongly linked to scientific journals from public universities (Farias; Lima; Santos, 2018).

This text outlines the skills and training of librarians that define their professional profile, followed by a history of publishing work and an overview of the current state of the market. This is justified to enhance the literature on the subject, which is still relatively scarce, and to contribute to a correlation between the skills and abilities taught on courses and what the market demands in job vacancies, particularly in the publishing industry, which still employs few librarians. In presenting the methodology, we discuss the findings based on job vacancies advertised on national and international job portals alongside the literature review on library and information science education. This provided us with the basis for comparing the skills and competencies mentioned in the literature with those listed in the job advertisements.

2 Skills, trends and training in Library and Information Science

In principle, “The teaching of Library Science originated from Decree No. 8.835 of 11 July 1911, which established the creation of the first Library Science course at the National Library” (Freira; Alauzo; Spudeit, 2018, p. 2) as regards academic education in Brazil, it is worth taking a closer look, particularly from a historical perspective. To this end, we have drawn on the literature, and Guimarães (1997, p. 126) summarizes it as follows:

[...], the following can be highlighted as key milestones:

- a) the vision of the erudite librarian, with a predominantly humanistic background, closely linked to culture and the arts, and strongly influenced by the French *École de Chartres*, a factor that guided the establishment of the country's first Library Science course: that of the National Library (1911-1930);
- b) the technically trained librarian, clearly influenced by the American model (which inspired the first courses in São Paulo), involved in the processing and organisation of documents (1930-1960);
- c) the official recognition of the profession at university level, with the introduction of professional legislation and the establishment of professional bodies (the 1960s);
- d) the establishment of postgraduate courses, the development of research in the field and the emergence of the first scientific journals in the field (the 1970s);
- e) the overhaul of the library and information science curriculum and the view of the librarian as a cultural and information professional (the 1980s).

In summary, the standard curriculum for Library and Information Science has undergone changes throughout its development as a higher-level profession, undergoing updates that at times leaned towards French influence with an emphasis on the humanities, whilst at other times tended towards a technical approach aligned with the American academic model. In the early years of the discipline's establishment, the schools in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo were guided by different visions. The former maintained its humanistic roots, whilst the latter was essentially technical (Almeida; Baptista, 2013, p. 3), as shown in Table 1:

Table 1 – Curricula and curriculum proposals for Library and Information Science in Brazil: 1911 - 1982

National Library				Mackenzie	São Paulo Department of Culture
1915 (1 year)	1931 (2 years)	1944	1962	1929-1931	1936-1937
. Bibliography . Paleography . Diplomatics . Numismatics	. Literary history with applications to Bibliography . Iconography and Cartography . Bibliography . Paleography . Diplomatics	. Library Organisation and Management . Cataloguing . Classification . Bibliography and Reference . History of Books and Libraries . History of Literature (Applied to Bibliography) . Introduction	. Reference Techniques . General Bibliography . Cataloguing and Classification . Organisation and Management of Libraries . Documentation Organisation and Techniques . Literature and Literary	. Cataloguing . Classification . Reference	. Cataloguing . Classification . Reference

		to Paleography . Individual courses	Bibliography . Introduction Historical and Sociological Culture . Document Reproduction . Paleography . Introduction to Philosophical and Artistic Culture		
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Source: Castro, 1982, *apud* Baptista, 1999, p. 13.

According to Freire, Alauzo e Spudeit (2018, p. 82) “Competence encompasses a set of knowledge, skills and attitudes. Knowledge refers to acquired learning, concepts and theories; skills involve knowing how to do things, putting knowledge into practice; attitude relates to behaviour, to knowing how to be”. The authors also cite Miranda (2004, *apud* Freire; Alauzo; Spudeit, 2018, p. 89) who emphasises that competences “[...] are related to methods, processes and techniques designed to carry out a specific activity”.

With regard to the specific skills of librarians, it is worth noting how recently this topic has come to the fore within the institution:

The specific National Curriculum Guidelines for the teaching of Library and Information Science were established in 2001 through Opinion CNE/CES 492/2001 of the National Education Council/Higher Education Chamber. This document defines the profile of graduates in the field, listed the competencies and skills required of graduates, and guided the curriculum content⁷ (Almeida; Baptista, 2013, p. 8, emphasis added).

⁷ The competencies and skills of graduates in Library and Information Science include those typical of this level of education. **A) General** · generate outputs based on acquired knowledge and disseminate them; · formulate and implement institutional policies; · develop, coordinate, implement and evaluate plans, programmes and projects; · make rational use of available resources; · develop and utilise new technologies; · translate the needs of individuals, groups and communities within their respective fields of practice; · carry out independent professional activities, such as guiding, directing, advising, providing consultancy, conducting expert assessments and issuing technical reports and opinions; · respond to social demands for information arising from the technological changes that characterise the contemporary world. **B) Specifics** Interact and value to the processes of generating, transferring and using information, in any and all environments; · Critique, investigate, propose, plan, implement and evaluate information resources and products; · Work with information sources of any kind; · Process information recorded on different types of media, by applying theoretical and practical knowledge of the collection, processing, storage and dissemination of information; · conduct research relating to products, processing, transfer and use of information (Brasil, 2001, p. 32-33).

Table 2 sets out the competencies of the 21st-century librarian; particular emphasis has been placed on the competency that, in other sources, is described as “diligence⁸”, which stood out due to its ability to encapsulate the professional’s work’.

Table 2 - Skills required of a 21st-century librarian

Personal skills	Professional skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Specialist knowledge of the content of the information resources available in the library, including the ability to evaluate them critically and filter them; . Specialist knowledge of the subject(s) of interest to the organisation in which the library or information centre operates; . Develop and manage convenient, accessible and cost-effective information services aligned with the organisation’s strategic direction; . Identify information needs and develop market high value-added information services and products to meet those identified needs; . Use information technology to acquire, organize and disseminate information; . Use appropriate business and marketing approaches to communicate the importance of information services to the organisation’s senior management; . Develop specific information products for use within or outside the organisation or for individual clients. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Commit to excellence in the performance of their professional duties; . Seek out challenges and identify new opportunities both within and outside the library; . Maintain a broad and comprehensive overview of the organisation; . Seek partnerships and alliances; . Foster an environment of mutual respect and trust; . Possess effective communication skills; . Work well as a part of a team; . Exercise leadership; . Plan, prioritise and focus on critical issues; . Commit to lifelong learning and personal career planning; . Possess personal business acumen and create new opportunities; . Recognise the value of personal and professional networks; . Recognise the value of solidarity; . Be flexible and optimistic in times of constant change.

Source: Special Libraries Association, 1996, *apud* Freire; Alauzo; Spudeit, 2018, p. 90.

More recently, IFLA published its latest Trend Report. The document forms part of a series that began in 2013 and aims to chart the future of the library profession and libraries. The latest edition, from 2024, identified seven global trends (Dezuanni; Osman; Burton; Heck, 2024):

- 1) Knowledge practices are changing, presenting opportunities and challenges from promoting equity, diversifying voices and tackling misinformation;
- 2) Artificial intelligence and new Technologies are transforming the creation, use and sharing of information, bringing with them risks (such as deepfakes) and new possibilities for interaction and protection;
- 3) The truth has become a matter of dispute, making it essential to rebuild trust in the media, the government and institutions;

⁸ Diligence. “care, zeal; application”, investigation, Search”. Available at: <https://www.aulete.com.br/dilig%C3%Aancia>. Accessed on: 18 May 2025.

4) The skills required are becoming more complex, demanding practical, critical and digital skills, whilst at the same time widening inequalities across different skill levels;

5) Digital technologies remain unevenly distributed, exacerbating the digital divide, despite the potential of digital inclusion to promote equity;

6) Information systems consume more resources, highlighting the need for practices aligned with the green economy and environment justice;

7) People are seeking a stronger sense of community, valuing shared spaces, local initiatives, online communities and more flexible ways of working.

The IFLA Report highlights the trends that need to shape librarian’s practice, given the opportunities and challenges facing society when it comes to information. This requires a rethinking of the skills acquired through their training. In light of this, IFLA has drawn up a framework of 22 essential skills designed specifically to address the trends identified in its Report (Figure 1).

Figure 1 – Skills agenda for the 2024 IFLA Trends Report



Source: Compiled by the authors, 2025, based on Badi *et al.*, 2025.

When comparing the trends predicted by IFLA, we observe that these skills fall under human and social perspectives, regardless of their specific characteristics (technological, political, socioeconomic, cultural, etc.). It is clear, therefore, that simply knowing how to use technological tools is merely a minor detail when compared to more demanding and complex professional requirements.

In the following section, the skills required by the publishing industry will be examined and compared with the skills and competencies most commonly found in the field of information science; this will be done with the aim of highlighting the professional librarian's ability to establish themselves in this field.

3 Publishing: a historical overview and the publishing industry

Since the invention of Gutenberg's movable-type printing press, which provided the technical means for the mass printing of books, pamphlets and printed materials in the West, a publishing market has developed, taking on distinct characteristics in each country according to economic, political and cultural factors. Bufrem and Freitas (2017) state that this movement sought to eliminate errors, be more accurate and fill the gap left by the dwindling number of professional copyists.

Thus, the concept of publishing emerged, and the activities previously carried out by librarians and copyists were taken over by professional publishers around 1830, combining intellectual and commercial skills. The publisher is directly responsible for managing all stages involved in the production and marketing of books, in both print and digital formats (Chartier, 1999).

The production, distribution and marketing of a book involve numerous stakeholders and specialist fields such as design, legal affairs, administration, advertising, marketing, sales and logistics. The graphic design phase, involving preparation and preliminary analysis, precedes the creation of the material, followed by the briefing or draft, layout, typesetting, pre-press, printing and finishing, in the case of physical publications.

Both in the stages leading up to and following the production of a book, librarians possess the skills required to work in the publishing industry, which go beyond cataloguing – one of the most common tasks for professionals in this sector.

When considering the Brazilian context, drawing on the relevant literature, we find reasons to explain the low level of participation by these professionals in the industry. Some of the factors observed were: the monopoly held by the large publishers in strategic niches, such as educational materials; reliance on government grants to encourage publication; the

lack of requirements for librarians in publishing policies; the low budgets of many publishers; the high production costs of books; the high price for the end consumer; and, finally, low per capita book consumption (Couto, 2006; Failla, 2025).

Added to this is the exponential growth of ebooks, which are controlled by giants such as Amazon; a company that acts as both Publisher and retailer in a capitalista system where digital commerce is on the rise, leading to the closure of bookshops and other physical retail outlets, as well as control over market prices in general (Gallash; Schroff, 2022; Cayne, 2023; Carrión, 2020).

3.1 The role of the librarian in the publishing industry

According to Souza (2020, p. 61), book publishing is the process of “transforming the manuscript into the final product for the consumer”, involving professionals from various fields of expertise. The publishing process involves the creation of an editorial policy, which sets out the subject matter of the publications, the target audience, and other guidelines that will inform the production process.

The first stage involves the manuscript reaching the publisher, a process that can vary depending on the circumstances; in some cases, manuscripts are sent directly for assessment, whilst in others a literary agent acts as an intermediary. The second stage takes place once the work has been approved for publication, during which the editor assesses the text and is responsible for making any necessary amendments before sending the document to the copy editor. In the case of foreign works, there is also the translation stage. The copy editor sends the text to the layout designer, who creates the graphic design and layout of the work; the file is printed, and it is at this stage that the document comes to be called a ‘proof’ (Araújo, 2008; Peruyera, 2019).

The text is usually proofread by more than one professional, and it is up to the editor to decide how many rounds of proofreading are required. The librarian is usually responsible for producing catalogue records, requesting the ISBN, standardising references and citations in accordance with ABNT, as well as creating terms for indexing. The final stage of the process involves the physical production of the publication, during which the manuscript is sent to the printers. It should be noted that, depending on the publisher, there may be variations in the publishing process when producing a work.

In addition to the duties traditionally carried out by librarians, certain publishers delegate other tasks. Some examples of this include Editora Companhia das Letras, which assign the following tasks to the librarian: layout and proofreading; liaising with service providers and suppliers; approving interior and cover proofs; reviewing cover proofs; and

handling plotters and promotional materials⁹. Blucher Publishing, meanwhile, delegates to the professional the management of digital books; registering books on digital book distribution platforms and also in digital libraries; issuing reports and monitoring page views¹⁰.

Finally, another route into publishing is through entrepreneurship, a field well represented in Brazil by the librarian-publisher Vagner Amaro, founder of the Malê publishing house. In an interview with Bibliomar magazine in 2018, Vagner explained that he had become a book publisher before setting up his own publishing house, whilst he was still working as a school librarian. We might also mention Briquet de Lemos, who, in 1993, founded the publishing house Briquet Lemos upon realising the lack of reference works in this field in Brazil.

4 Methodology

A literature review was conducted using databases such as: CAPES Journals, Scielo, Jstor, Latindex and Google Scholar. To this end, we used the following terms accompanied by the boolean operator AND: “librarian and publishing”; “library and information science and publishing”; “publishing and library professionals”; “publishers and the work of librarians”. For this study, articles in both Portuguese and English were accepted.

We also drew on a comparative analysis of job vacancies available in Brazil, the United States and the UK sourced from websites such as Publish News, Gupy and Catho – for Brazil, and Library Publishing and the ALA Job List – for vacancies abroad – as well as LinkedIn for both cases. Initially, job advertisements and recruitment processes were researched for the period April to May 2025, considering vacancies with open applications and those that had already closed. Next, vacancies mentioning “librarian”, “library science”, “information science”, “book publishing”, “publishing” and “editorial production” for domestic vacancies, and the terms “librarian”, “library science”, “publisher” and “publishing” for overseas vacancies. The vacancies found were then filtered, prioritising only those most relevant to the aims of this research, in order to link the skills acquired during librarian training to the field of publishing.

⁹ Available at:
<https://www.publishnews.com.br/materias/2021/11/11/companhia-das-letras-contrata-assistente-de-producao>.
Accessed on: 29 Apr. 2025.

¹⁰ Available at:
<https://www.publishnews.com.br/materias/2024/01/23/editora-blucher-contrata-analista-de-livros-digitais>.
Accessed on: 29 Apr. 2025.

5 Results

Eight career opportunities in the publishing sector were selected, five of which are based in Brazil and three abroad. The positions in Brazil cover various areas of the publishing sector and are spread across leading publishing houses and educational institutions. Each of these opportunities reveals a diverse range of required skills. Our aim was not to conduct an exhaustive analysis of these vacancies, but rather to produce a comparative study between what is currently being sought by the national and international publishing markets and what is traditionally listed as skills and competencies in librarian training.

Starting with opportunities in Brazil. Editora Gente, based in São Paulo (SP), has a vacancy, at the time of writing (June 2025), for a Junior Editorial Analyst¹¹. The successful candidate will oversee all stages of the editorial production process, from cover design and layout to the finalisation of the book. The required duties include: translation, preparation, proofreading, schedule management, management of ebooks and special materials, as well as communication with suppliers and support for the marketing department. A degree in fields such as Journalism, Languages or Editorial Production is also required, along with prior experience in the publishing industry; proficiency in Adobe software; advanced English; and familiarity with digital platforms.

Another vacancy highlighted was at Editora Panini, based in Barueri (SP), which is recruiting a Senior Editor to work in the manga publishing department¹². The successful candidate will manage relationships with licensors, oversee the publishing process, lay out materials and coordinate approvals with suppliers and printers. A degree in fields such as Publishing or Languages is required, as well as fluency in English and knowledge of Japanese pop culture.

Arco Educação, meanwhile, is seeking a Content Editor in the field of Humanities, based in Fortaleza (CE)¹³. The role involves: overseeing the editorial stages of educational materials, supervising content based on the National Common Core Curriculum (BNCC), and preparing briefings for authors, as well as coordinating timetables and conducting pedagogical evaluations of the contents. In terms of academic background, candidates are expected to have a degree in History, Geography, Philosophy or Sociology, with experience in editing teaching materials and knowledge of the structure of the New Secondary Education system.

¹¹ Available at: <https://www.publishnews.com.br/empregos/7/32/26/9499/1482>.

¹² Available at: https://editorapanini brasil.gupy.io/jobs/9128513?jobBoardSource=gupy_public_page.

¹³ Available at: https://job-boards.greenhouse.io/arcoeducacao/jobs/5490990004?gh_jid=5490990004.

Editora Universo dos Livros (SP) also has a vacancy for an Editorial Assistant¹⁴. The successful candidate will assist with editing and proofreading texts, organising editorial workflows, liaising with translators and proofreaders, and managing documents and publications. A degree in Languages or Publishing is required, along with fluent English and a thorough understanding of editorial standards. Another opportunity is available on the Catho platform for the same role; although the description is general, the focus is on organising editorial workflows and supporting content production¹⁵. Furthermore, the company does not specify technical requirements or detailed benefits.

On the international stage, these vacancies offer an insight into the requirements and working practices of major publishing groups in the United States and the United Kingdom. As well as providing a global perspective on the career, these opportunities highlight aspects such as salaries in foreign currency (converted into Brazilian reais), working arrangements, and specific cultural and linguistic requirements.

Starting with the United States, The Wyanoke Group, based in West Deptford, New Jersey, is recruiting an Editorial Assistant to work on health-related journals¹⁶. The role involves the technical editing of manuscripts, checking references, preparing figures and tables, and reviewing layouts. Candidates must have a university degree in a writing-related field, as well as proficiency in Microsoft Office, particularly Word and Outlook. The salary offered ranges from US\$36,000 and US\$37,000 per annum.

In the UK, Penguin Random House UK has two vacancies. The first is for an Editorial Director of Operations in the Vintage division, based in London¹⁷. The role requires experience in leading editorial teams and managing book production schedules. The salary ranges from £50,000 and £60,000 per annum, and the role requires management, communication and coordination skills when working with internal teams and freelancers.

The second vacancy at Penguin is for an Assistant Editor, also based in London¹⁸. The successful candidate will be responsible for supporting the publisher with editorial tasks, proofreading, organising meetings, preparing synopses and updating internal systems. The role requires excellent command of the English language, strong organisational skills and ability to build good working relationships with authors, agents, and the marketing and production teams.

¹⁴ Available at: <https://www.publishnews.com.br/empregos/7/32/26/9499/1490>.

¹⁵ Available at: <https://www.catho.com.br/vagas/assistente-editorial/>.

¹⁶ Available at: <https://www.linkedin.com/jobs/view/4221781542>.

¹⁷ Available at: <https://www.linkedin.com/jobs/view/4227006169>.

¹⁸ Available at: <https://www.linkedin.com/jobs/view/4228944157>.

These vacancies demonstrate how the publishing industry, both in Brazil and abroad, offers a wide range of career opportunities, requiring not only technical knowledge but also digital skills, language proficiency and the ability to work as part of a team.

6 A comparison of skills: from theory to practice

In light of the above, the following is a list of the skills mentioned in the literature relating to publishing work, which a qualified librarian is theoretically capable of Performing, and which are currently being sought in job advertisements.

Table 3 - Librarian skills in the field of commercial publishing as demonstrated in the literature and required in national and international job advertisements

Skills identified in literature		Skills required for the vacancies	
Technical	Behavioural	Technical	Behavioural
Familiarity with indexing services, directories and databases	Attention	Experience in metadata management	Good communication skills
Understanding the editorial workflow	Autonomy	Experience with digital library platforms	Ability to stay focused under pressure
Verbal and written communication skills	Creativity	Proficiency in editorial standards	Creativity
Analytical and summarising skills	Leadership	-	-
Proficiency in standardisation, reference management tools and formatting conventions for academic publications	Proactivity	Proficiency in basic PDF editing tools	Proactivity
Knowledge and proficiency in Word processing software	Organisation	Proficiency in Microsoft Office	Organisation
Proficiency in textual interpretation	Interpersonal skills	Enjoy reading	Ability to work as part of a team
Advanced English	Dynamism	Management skills	Attention to details

Source: compiled by the authors, 2025.

In addition to the roles mentioned, other skills may also be required, such as proficiency in other languages, as noted by Maimone and Tálamo (2008) and Farias, Lima and Santos (2018), which is also listed as a requirement in some of the job advertisements.

Furthermore, related areas were also identified that required prior experience and knowledge of, and proficiency in, specific software, such as Content Management System (CMS), which offer functions for online publishing, and desktop publishing tools such as Adobe InDesign¹⁹. It should be noted that the specific requirements placed on professionals vary according to the editorial policy established by the company or organisation. Generally, undergraduate courses in Library and Information Science do not usually offer modules or content solely focused on the use of tools, given the frequent updates to software versions.

During the analysis of competencies, as well as theoretical discussion, it is also clear that professionals must be versatile and possess good interpersonal skills, as they are involved in every stage of the editorial process. As such, it can be considered that undergraduate and postgraduate training in Library and Information Science generally meets the requirements of professional practice. However, it is observed that the market has a preference for those with further training, attributing this requirement in some cases to the competence highlighted as diligence. It can therefore be inferred that it is the librarian's responsibility to fully develop their technical skills, encompassing the field of publishing and its technologies, with a focus on digital platforms.

In short, there appears to be little demand for this professional in the commercial sector; instead, they are more in demand and better suited to the university and academic sectors. One of the factors contributing to this is the lack of awareness, on the part of both publishers and the professionals themselves, of how to fully exploit their potential.

Another related factor is the teaching of courses specifically dedicated to publishing. In most cases, programmes offer courses under this name, but these are geared towards the scientific context, focusing on the teaching of scientific journals and repositories, and the flow of scientific information (Prado; Mendes, 2024; Farias; Lima; Santos, 2018).

7 Final considerations

The relationship between training and professional practice must be integrated into teaching, research, outreach and the updating of educational programmes. In Library and Information Science, where the subject of study is information – which is by nature versatile and volatile – this alignment becomes even more pressing.

The publishing market remains largely untapped by librarians, who mainly work in traditional settings. However, there is clear potential for these professionals to meet the growing demand for information management and the improvement of publishing processes.

¹⁹ Available in: <https://www.oracle.com/content-management/what-is-cms>. Accessed on: 19 May 2025.

The job vacancies analysed reveal opportunities to work in both national and international contexts, suggesting that this is an emerging field, particularly for librarians with further training and proficiency in software and technological tools. Of particular note is the potential for librarians to play a role in managing the editorial process.

A comparison between job requirements and the skills highlighted in the literature reveals a strong correlation. Nevertheless, job advertisements rarely mention a degree in Library and Information Science, even though this meets a number of the market's requirements. To address this situation, we propose:

i) Expanding the range of courses on book publishing: although this was not the focus of this article, we have identified in the literature that there is a limited provision of such teaching. Even from a systemic perspective of the curriculum, whilst many of the requirements mentioned in job advertisements are met by various modules within the course, the inclusion of a specific module strengthens the prospects for employment in this field.

ii) To broaden the horizons of students and staff regarding the job markets they can enter: it is a well-established fact that some companies refrain from hiring graduates in Library and Information Science due to a still-traditional view of the field. This can change if candidates take a more proactive approach to applying for roles, demonstrating that they possess the necessary skills. A job description that fails to mention the field should not be seen as a barrier.

iii) Strengthening the link between theory and practice at undergraduate level, specifically through outreach activities: expanding outreach projects or supervised work placements with publishers, independent publishing houses, e-commerce firms and university presses can provide students with practical experience in publishing.

iv) To encourage the production and dissemination of evidence regarding the role of librarians in the publishing industry: research, case studies and job vacancy surveys can help to highlight these experiences, challenge stereotypes about the profession and inform evidence-based changes to the curriculum.

As suggestions for future research, we propose collecting data from professionals working in the publishing industry in order to understand their career paths in this field (challenges, advantages, continuing professional development), and investigating whether international Library and Information Science courses includes modules related to publishing, with a view to understanding what is taught (tools, skills, competencies).

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