



The Information Professional - areas of competence

This document illustrates the competencies of an Information Professional (InfoPro) by describing his/her core skills and the range of different roles and responsibilities.

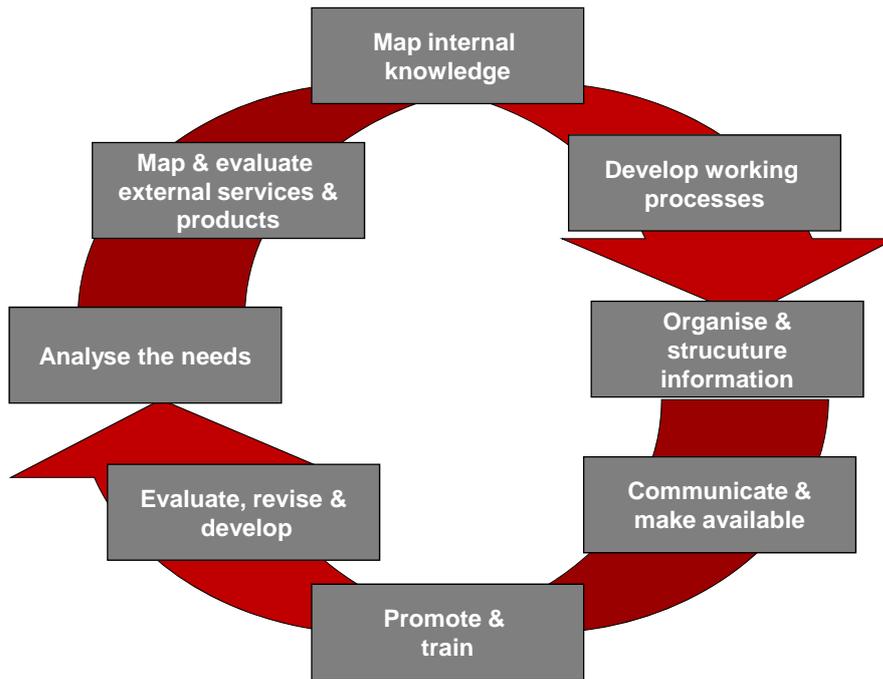
The InfoPro contributes to the entire organization

The InfoPro manages the information which is required for successful business of the organization. It can be both external information and internally produced information. As the information management issues are growing in complexity and importance, it is increasingly important that the InfoPro holds a strategic responsibility in the organization.

The competencies of an InfoPro are needed and used at various levels in all sectors and industries in both public and private businesses. Some examples of professional titles are Information Specialist, Business Intelligence Manager, Librarian, Research Consultant, Knowledge Manager, Records Manager, Metadata Development Specialist, Information Officer, Web Editor, and Project Manager.

Core business and skills of the InfoPro

The InfoPro creates solutions for information as a strategic resource. The competence covers all aspects of implementing an information plan in the organization.



Fulfilling these tasks requires knowledge and skills in

- Information and knowledge organization
- Information research
- Training in information research
- Evaluation of information sources
- Business Intelligence
- Analysis of information needs
- Knowledge of the organization's information needs at strategic as well as individual levels.

A notable development is that the core business of an InfoPro is more and more integrated into the organization's regular working processes. In development projects, business processes, market analysis and other business intelligence activities the InfoPro is working alongside with other professional skills. Instead of being a marginal support process the InfoPro's activities have become a natural part of ordinary work in the organization.

The different roles and responsibilities in the organization

The InfoPro can have different roles depending on the organization and the activities. The roles lie on both strategic and operational level.

Strategic level

Examples of responsibilities:

- Vendor Portfolio Management: evaluate suppliers and tools; negotiate contracts for databases, journals, books, and various tools. This role is becoming increasingly complex as the information in physical form is replaced by digital information.
- Coordinate information work and provide professional support on information issues, for example formulating objectives and guidelines for information work and watching information and communication aspects of various projects.

- Plan and coordinate business intelligence and media monitoring.
- Manage needs analysis, information strategies and business development.
- Develop processes and guidelines for effective information provision and management of external and internal information.

Operational level

Examples of responsibilities:

- Information management: organizing and structuring internal and external firm-specific information (intranet/portals/dashboards).
- e-library, intranet, web: be responsible for and develop content and structure. Organizing and structuring information resources so that they become searchable in a user friendly, consistent and understandable way.
- Monitoring the business environment and media: competitive analyses that support business processes.
- Project manager/team member in R&D-activities, marketing and business development, IT, e-communication and other communication.
- Educational role for increased information literacy in the organization.
- Copyright and its application.

Success Factors

When information is treated as a strategic resource, the need for a professional management will increase.

There is a great need for InfoPro's skills and this need is unlikely to diminish in the future. Surveys show that employees spend a lot of time looking for information, recreating information that already exists, and going through the information that was sent to them "just in case". The cost of unmanaged information is considerable for companies and organizations and it creates stress for the individual. Professionally managed information reduces the problems, increases productivity and saves costs.

Some success factors for the InfoPro are

- Clear role in the organization in terms of information management and information provision, at both strategic and operational level.
- Business intelligence and information management is embedded in the organization's structure and work processes.
- The skills of the InfoPro are part of different projects and working groups.
- Collaboration with other functions in the organization who work with these issues, such as IT, Web, and communication / information services.

The future of the profession is dependent upon InfoPro's ability to drive issues like

- Information is considered as a strategic resource.
- Employers are aware of that the InfoPro's competence is relevant to their business.
- Information management is seen as an area that can and will be developed using scientific methods.
- The professionalism is developed through education, research and practice.

Where to go for competence development?

The Swedish Association for Information Specialists offers courses and conferences in the field. Membership in the association creates opportunities to networking and to benefit from colleagues' experience. The Association also serves as a referral body for matters concerning the profession.

Swedish Association for Information Specialists

www.sfis.nu

Comments

This document illustrates the skills of the InfoPro. The document is intended primarily to provide support for the InfoPro in communication with managers, colleagues and prospective employers. It can also be used to highlight the skills to companies and organizations that need a professional and cost effective information management.

The document has been prepared in March 2010 by RIPS (Roundtable on Information Provision Strategies), a network to develop strategic skills within the Swedish Association for Information Specialists.

Translated to English in May 2012 by Margareta Nelke, a member of RIPS.