

THE FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF INFORMATION STUDIES

CAREER PATTERNS OF WOMEN LIBRARIANS  
WHO WERE EARLY ADOPTERS OF THE INTERNET

By

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This work is dedicated with love and appreciation  
to my husband

**Robert A. Ladner, Jr.**

*“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be  
transformed by the renewing of your mind.”  
Romans 12:2*

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## ABSTRACT

Librarians have not generally been viewed as valuable contributors in the information-age workplace, yet librarians have the professional training to organize and manage information in a variety of contexts and forms, a critical concern in the 21st century. How do we account for the marginalization of librarianship in today's information-driven world? Why are librarians seen as peripheral to our information-based economy? This research considers the problem by looking at career progression, undervaluation of librarianship within the context of other information professions, and professional identity of 20 women librarians who were early adopters of the Internet working in corporations and other organizational environments in which the library is not institutionalized.

The research focuses on issues of expertise and gender by exploring how women with technological expertise (a male-identified skill) in a female-identified profession (librarianship) make sense of their experiences in the changing information workplace (a gendered realm). The study is positioned within the conceptual framework of Andrew Abbott's jurisdictional conflict model and interpreted from a feminist critical perspective using Joan Acker's theory of gendered organizations.

Research participants were selected from a group of special librarians who were part of a study of Internet use in the early 1990s. Data were obtained through telephone interviews and web-based questionnaires. Narrative and thematic approaches were used to analyze and interpret the findings.