



October 20, 2017

Ms. Joanne Lipman  
Editor-in-Chief of USA Today  
7950 Jones Branch Drive  
McLean, VA 22108

Dear Ms. Lipman,

In our roles as the Board of Directors of the Association for Library and Information Science Education (ALISE), we are writing to express our profound disappointment with the *USA Today* career advice feature on October 13, 2017 entitled [“Careers: 8 jobs that won’t exist in 2030,”](#) which declared that “librarian” is the number one career among the eight jobs that will disappear in 2030. This is a false and inaccurate statement on two fronts: first, that the profession is declining, and second, that this alleged decline is a result of libraries as warehouses of printed books.

The author of this article may not realize that a professional librarian position in the U.S. and many other countries requires a Master’s degree. According to a [recent article in \*Library Journal\*](#), 86% of recent graduates from American Library Association (ALA) accredited schools have found jobs. Another [recent report](#) (released on September 28, 2017) by Pearson, Nesta, and Oxford University predicts growth in the information professions, including librarians, curators, and archivists. They are among the top ten jobs likely to experience increased demand in 2030. The report is summarized by *Library Journal* in its article entitled [“The Job Outlook: In 2030, Librarians Will Be in Demand.”](#) Furthermore, your own job posting section for librarian positions does not show the decline of our profession. A close reading of the job titles should have indicated to the author that librarians do more than simply check out books.

This article demonstrates a lack of understanding of librarians' work as information professionals. Libraries provide access to print and special collections of media, and subscription-based or free electronic resources. All of these must be curated, cataloged, or organized by professional librarians to make them accessible to their users. College and university librarians carry out research consultations and instruct student and faculty in finding, evaluating, and using information. Public librarians connect patrons to community resources, lead programming for children and adults, and engage in community outreach and advocacy. Special librarians work for corporations, federal and state institutions, focusing on gathering competitive intelligence and making sure their organizations have access to the information they need to make sound business or strategic decisions.

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The article also inaccurately presents libraries as dedicated solely to books:

More and more people are clearing out those paperbacks and downloading e-books on their Tablets and Kindles instead. The same goes for borrowing — as books fall out of favor, libraries are not as popular as they once were. That means you'll have a tough time finding a job if you decide to become a librarian. Many schools and universities are already moving their libraries off the shelves and onto the Internet.

In addition to providing access to books, journals, newspapers, and other media, both electronically and in print, libraries provide access to technology, from computers, laptops, and iPads to 3D printers, multimedia software, and recording studios. Many libraries have expanded their non-print collections and are circulating a wide variety of objects including tools, musical instruments, toys, wifi hotspots, and artwork. Libraries are highly valued as community centers and safe spaces that allow people to connect with information and with each other. Research shows that libraries are one of the most trusted and valued public institutions in the country.

The article further argues that librarians and libraries are not needed because printed books are falling out of favor. However, there is considerable counter-evidence that printed books are still in demand, including the articles cited below.

Cain, S. (2017, March 14). Ebook sales continue to fall as younger generations drive appetite for print. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2017/mar/14/ebook-sales-continue-to-fall-nielsen-survey-uk-book-sales>

Jenkins, S. (2016, May 13). Books are back. Only the technodazzled thought they would go away. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/may/13/books-ebook-publishers-paper>

Milliot, J. (2017, January 20). The Bad News About E-books: Nielsen reports units fell 16% in 2016 compared to 2015. *Publishers Weekly*. Retrieved from: <https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/digital/retailing/article/72563-the-bad-news-about-e-books.html>

We respectfully request an open response from you or from the author of the article.

Sincerely,

ALISE Board of Directors

Dietmar Wolfram (President), Heidi Julien (President-Elect), Louise Spiteri (Past President), Denice Adkins (Secretary/Treasurer), Leanne Bowler (Director for Special Interest Groups), Cecilia Salvatore (Director for Membership Services), Rong Tang (Director for External Relations)