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Contribution of Information Professionals in the Multidisciplinary World of Web Information Systems (WIS)*

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Background

- 🌐 **Roles of information professionals currently redefined** in part due to **technological changes**
 - Web information systems (**WIS**): challenging technology
- 🌐 Organizations making **massive investments in WIS**
 - E.g. governments in moving toward **e-government** model
- 🌐 **No reference model** for key players, organizational units, and competencies
 - Lack of knowledge & consensus on roles of information professionals in WIS

Methodology

- 🌐 **Descriptive & exploratory** study, **qualitative** approach
- 🌐 Data collection: **Fall 2001 to Winter 2003**
 - in depth **interviews** with information professionals involved in WIS
 - ❖ **Information professional**: master degree in information sciences or librarianship and information sciences (or equivalent)
 - ❖ head offices of **seven departments of the Canadian government**
 - relevant **documentation** from their environment
- 🌐 **Qualitative content analysis** of interview transcripts

Findings

Interviewees' profile (1)

Relatively new
in their positions

Interviewees' experience (N=32)

Number of years	Number of respondents	
	Actual position	Work with WIS
<1 year	11 (34%)	1 (3%)
1-5 years	13 (41%)	13 (41%)
5-10 years	7 (22%)	18 (56%)
16-20 years	1 (3%)	0 (0%)

Experienced
with WIS

Findings

Respondents' profile (2)

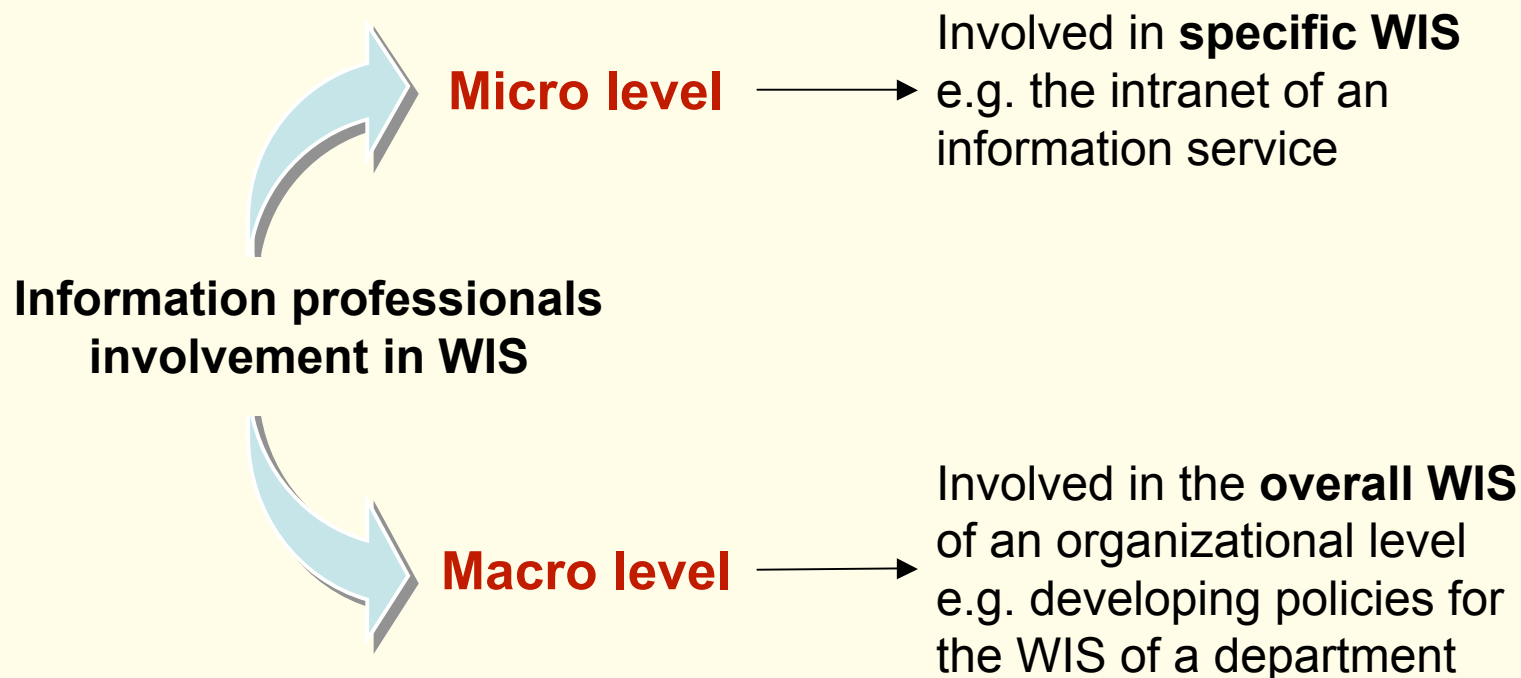
"classical" profile
56,25%

Units and classification codes (N=32)

UNITS	CLASSIFICATION CODES					Total
	LS (Library Science)	CS (Computer Science)	IS (Information Services)	CO (Commerce Officer)	Question not asked	
Information services	18	1	0	0	1	20
Different divisions	4	0	0	1	0	5
Information management group	4	0	0	0	0	4
Technology group	0	1	0	0	0	1
Government on-line office	1	0	0	0	0	1
Communication group	0	0	1	0	0	1
<i>Total</i>	27	2	1	1	1	32

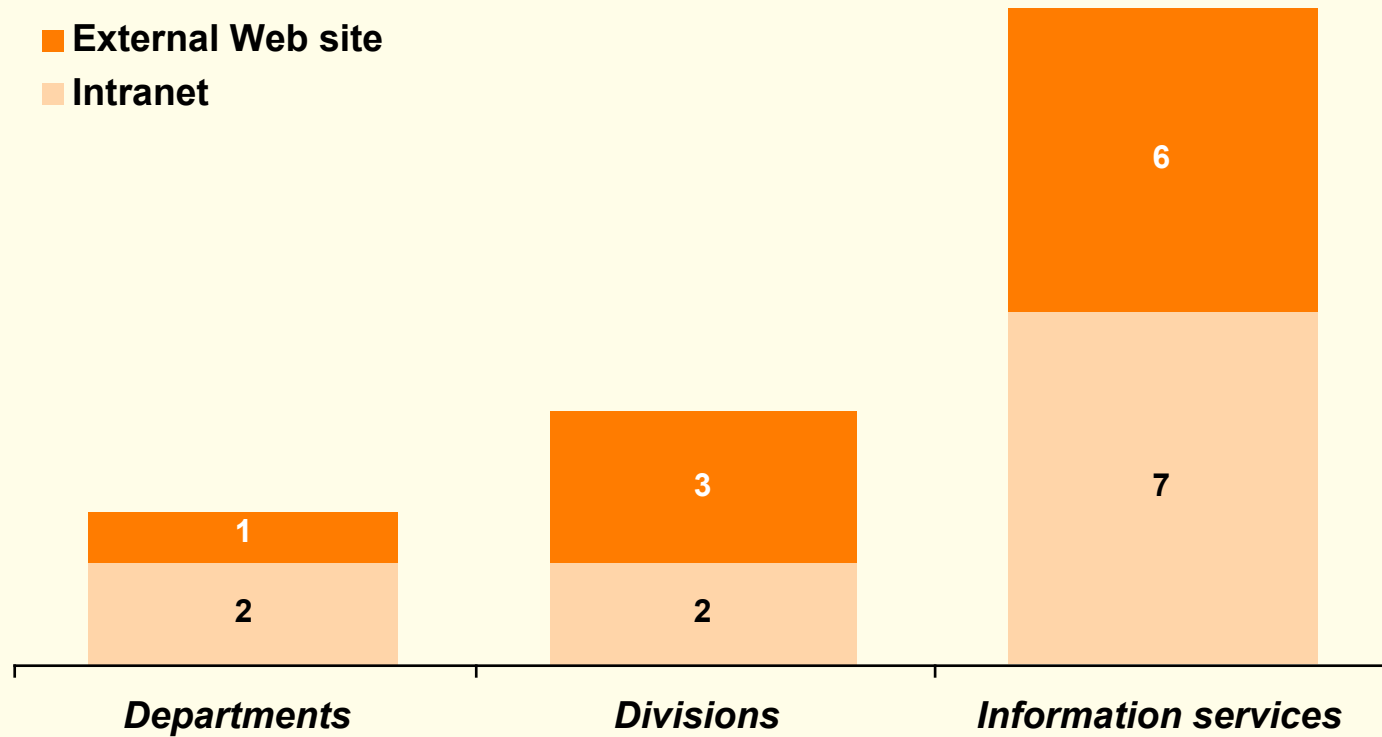
Findings

WIS' profile



Findings

WIS' profile - micro level (N=21)



Findings

WIS-related tasks (1)

CATEGORIES OF TASKS	TASKS	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS (N=32)
Content	Content development and updating	23 (72%)
	Content management	5 (16%)
	Content organization	5 (16%)
	Metadata development	3 (9%)
	Navigation development	2 (6%)
	Quality control of the content	1 (3%)
	Development of documentary tools	1 (3%)
	<i>Total</i>	26 (81%)
Technologies	Tasks related to Web pages	17 (53%)
	General technological tasks	7 (22%)
	Technology management	3 (9%)
	<i>Total</i>	19 (59%)
Users	Interaction with users	7 (22%)
Graphic interface	Design development	2 (6%)
	Design management	1 (3%)
	<i>Total</i>	3 (9%)

Findings

WIS-related tasks (2)

WIS-related tasks related to multiple categories

TASKS	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS (N=32)
Participation in committees	23 (72%)
WIS management or WIS-related project management	16 (50%)
Promotion, awareness	9 (28%)
Advice, suggestions, recommendations	8 (25%)
Development of policies	7 (22%)
WIS planning or WIS-related project planning	5 (16%)
Compliance with policies	4 (13%)
Development of electronic collections	4 (13%)
Updating knowledge	3 (9%)
Evaluation of the WIS performance	3 (9%)
Intermediary role	3 (9%)

Findings

Factors influencing WIS-related tasks

General types of WIS

tasks quite **similar** except for **collection development**



WIS-related tasks of information professionals

Organizational levels represented

emphasis on task categories varied with **WIS scope**



Types of positions filled

managers, webmasters, system librarians



Findings

Place in WIS as perceived by interviewees

Place in WIS

CATEGORIES OF TASKS	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS (N=31)
Content	25 (81%)
Users	11 (35%)
Multiple categories tasks	9 (29%)
Technologies	2 (6%)
Graphic interface	1 (3%)

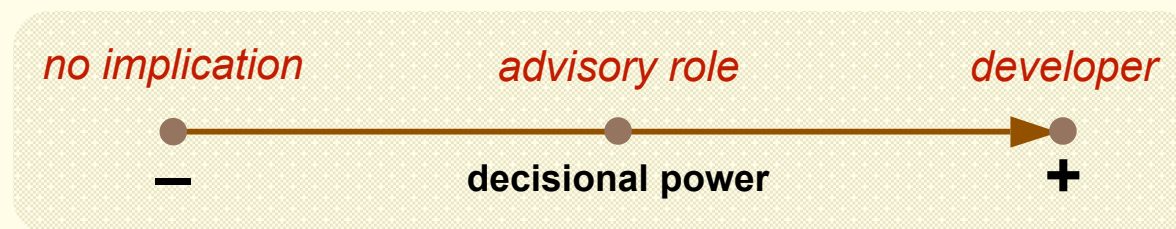
Obstacles

OBSTACLES	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS (N=30)
Characteristics of the IP profession e.g. not a well known profession, feminization of the profession	23 (77%)
Other groups involved / competition	17 (57%)
Individual characteristics: bad “sellers”, passiveness, lack of confidence in their capacities	16 (53%)
WIS characteristics: partial understanding of the WIS, technologies in perpetual evolution	11 (37%)
Incomplete training and competencies	6 (20%)
Lack of resources	5 (17%)
Culture: Web and information considered as source of power	4 (13%)

Discussion

Literature and Study: Differences and similarities

- 🌐 **Same categories of tasks** *but* **emphasis** sometimes **different**
- 🌐 **New tasks** found in the study
- 🌐 **Greater variety** in tasks related to **information policies** found in the study
 - *Scope & Decisional power*



Conclusions

Information professionals & WIS

- 🌐 **Natural correspondence** between informational dimension of WIS and competencies of information professionals
- 🌐 Information professionals involved in WIS but **few** in WIS representing **broader organizational levels** than information services
- 🌐 Information professionals have to **take their place** in multidisciplinary world of WIS before someone else does

Conclusions

Some general recommendations

- Institutions and associations training information professionals in WIS-related context
 - WIS training from **other disciplines**
 - WIS in an **ecological, global perspective**
 - **In depth training** on WIS dimensions more specific to information professionals
- Organizations
 - WIS in an **ecological, global perspective**
 - WIS in its **complexity**

Conclusions

Future research

- 🌐 **Other types of WIS** such as extranets, and WIS in which no IP are involved
- 🌐 **Different contexts:** other types of governments, other types of organizations, etc.
- 🌐 **Different perspectives** e.g. impact of competencies of Web team on WIS usability