

# Developing a Library Market Research Service

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## Background Info

- Began with predecessor in business librarian position and different Provost leadership
- Office of the Provost was paying a market research firm for insights into graduate program development
  - Provost didn't want to approve new programs without knowing what the market for them looked like
  - \$\$\$
- Library & Librarians offered resources and skills to provide a similar if not the same service at no added cost
- Service stalled with position vacancies (library) and personnel changes (Provost)
  - Communication slowed dramatically
- Library kept it "alive"
  - Done ad hoc by other librarians
  - Inclusion in new Business Librarian position description

# Anatomy of a Report

Each report consists of three main components:

## Academic Program Analysis

- Focuses on competing programs at other universities identified either anecdotally or through initial research.
- Each program is evaluated by format, length and focus, target audience, size, conferrals etc.

## Labor Market Analysis

- Reviews the potential job market for those who graduate with a particular degree.
- Provides an analysis of the skills demanded by employers in the area, the number of jobs available, trends in the top industries, employment projections etc.

## Source/Methodology and Appendices

- Contains citations from consulted sources along with additional charts of data.



## Market Analysis | MA in Digital Composition

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### Competitive Analysis

- ➔ The competitor programs vary in focus, and delivery format, however they typically conform to a 1-2 year completion schedule.<sup>1</sup>
- 9 out of the top 10 institutions with the largest market share have a program with online offerings
- With few exceptions, every program requires their students to complete a final project either in the form of a thesis or portfolio
- Institutions vary in what department offers the program with some being offered by continuing education schools within the institution

See Appendix A for full details on the provided competitors and market share leaders

Programs come in a few varieties with some notable differences between their curriculum's focus.<sup>2</sup>

#### Professional Writing

- Typically focuses on writing for business settings
- Can also cover technical writing or writing for specific outlets i.e. new media, grants, etc.

#### English with specialization

- Core courses will cover

#### Job Postings

- ➔ There were 12,001 job postings nationwide in the last 12 months seeking employees with inferred degree Master's degree in Professional, Technical, Business and Scientific Writing or Rhetoric and Composition degrees.<sup>7</sup>

#### Employment Options

Most Common Job Title<sup>8</sup>

Technical Writer  
Medical Writer  
Senior Medical Writer  
Senior Technical Writer  
Grocery Order Writer  
Produce Order Writer  
Bakery Order Writer  
Technical Writer, Card Services  
Editor  
Proposal Writer

lost Common Employers  
employers with 50 or more job postings<sup>9</sup>

Whole Foods Market, Inc.  
SAIC  
Gannett Company Incorporated  
Fiserv

## Academic Program Analysis

Institution*	Most Similar Program	Conferrals (2019)**	% Change 2012-16
Carnegie Mellon University	Masters of Professional Writing	11	-21.43%
Chatham University	Masters of Professional Writing	11	-15.38%
Texas Tech University	Masters in Technical Communication	6	-33.33%
New York University***	MS in Professional Writing	0	0%
Michigan State University***	MA in Digital Rhetoric & Professional Writing	3	50%
University of Minnesota – Twin Cities	MA in Rhetoric, Scientific and Technical Communication	2	100%
UMass - Dartmouth	MA in Professional Writing & Communication	10	-16.7%
Old Dominion University	MA in English****	7	-61.11%
University of Cincinnati	Masters in Professional Writing	8	100%

## Labor Market Analysis

### Salary Posted

- ➔ Postings requesting a Master's degree do not list a higher salary than those requesting a Bachelor's The mean salary among postings was \$70,232.<sup>10</sup>

Bachelor's Degree  
4,858 postings  
\$72,030

Master's Degree  
12,001 postings  
\$67,351

### Most Requested Skills

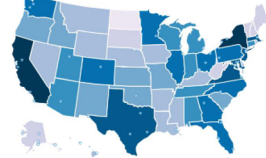
- ➔ The most requested baseline skills are writing, editing, communication skills, research and organizational skills. (Appendix E).<sup>11</sup>

Top Skill Clusters

Skill Cluster	Demand %
Media and Writing	64.7%

### Demand

Demand is the strongest in the following locations (Appendix D).<sup>12</sup>



### Experience Posted

This chart shows the amount of experience requested for the advertised positions.<sup>13</sup>

100%

# Improvements

- Consistent staffing in both departments
  - Business Librarian, Entrepreneurship Librarian, Graduate Marketing Manager
- More dedicated to communicating and meeting
- Revamped request process for schools/departments
  - Provost communicates with interested parties
  - They are asked to complete a Qualtrics based survey to collect information that librarians need to create report
    - Librarians communicate with Provost any further needs
  - Librarians research existing competitor programs for the proposed degree and the labor market for graduates with the degree (both based on CIP code)
  - After 4-6 weeks, a completed report is provided to the Provost to share with the requestor & inform decisions

# How can you implement?

## 1 Get Buy-in

Librarians already have the unique skills and access to resources to implement a program such as this. However, buy-in from both library and university administration is important to the success of a program because:

- Reports are time consuming to complete
- It is an unorthodox use of subscription resources and you may need to purchase additional resources
- Falls outside scope of a traditional librarian role on campus

## 2a Decide your process for receiving and managing requests and the selected resources for creating reports

We created a process and request form that funneled and prioritized the overflow of legitimate and incomplete requests.

We purchased a new database called Burning Glass Technologies to support this project in addition to using Ibisworld/other industry research databases, freely available websites such as the university program pages and US News and World Report rankings, and government resources like IPEDs and Bureau of Labor Statistics reports.

## 2b Determine staffing and time management needs

Two full-time librarians are trained to offer this services and liaison librarians are consulted as needed.

- You may need to hire and train a graduate student worker to assist with the upflow.

A dedicated staff person on the Provost side to act as liaison to the requesters helps keep librarian focus on research

- Result of having buy-in from university administration

## Fruits of our recent labor

***New programs and ways to learn launch this fall...***students on the Pittsburgh campus can now earn a [Master of Education in PreK-12 Special Education.](#)

The university announced recently the additional of a new degree program that was informed by our report on secondary education with specializations in urban and special education.