

Librarianship on the Innovative Team

It's a data-driven world. Who better to turn to in this knowledge-hungry digital economy than the information stewards themselves? Librarians. From Product to Technical Consulting and Implementation, they are here for you in the places you need them most at Innovative. Here is an inside look at why they do what they do!



Samantha

Senior Product Manager



How did you find your way into library sciences?

There are many reasons that I ended up in libraries... My mother started working at the local public library as a cataloger shortly after graduating college (she completed her degree as an adult while I was finishing high school). When I signed up at the same University to start my undergraduate degree, my mother made sure that my work-study would be at the University library. Over my four years working at the circulation desk and the associated learning resource center next door on the first floor of the building I was given more privileges and responsibilities such as overseeing the closing of the library in the evenings and on weekends. I was encouraged by the librarians there to consider pursuing a Masters of Library Science degree after I graduated...which I did.

Why are libraries important to you?

Libraries are important to me because as someone who grew up in poverty in a region where poverty is prevalent, libraries have always provided services to my community that greatly enrich lives. They provide resources, programming, and fill needs that would otherwise be out of reach for many. Their only agenda is to serve their community -- everyone can visit, use materials, attend programs, and exist in the library space free of charge. It's really a beautiful thing.

How has your work as a librarian informed your role at Innovative?

My experience in libraries working with the public at the circulation desk, reference desk, collection development for libraries at a book distributor, and more behind the scenes work with archival collections have all given me various perspectives that have helped me

understand and empathize with our customers. I have always had a librarian related role at Innovative and Clarivate, beginning as a Systems Librarian for the Virtua ILS and Vital DAMS long ago. My work in support of ILS systems, digital asset management systems, discover applications, and reporting features have also greatly influenced my work as a Product Manager – having both firsthand experience in the frustrations of working with various types of software and secondhand experience through developing deep relationships with librarian customers across the world to learn about their workflows and needs. As a Sr. Product Manager today for the Vega Discover system and the Vega Mobile Worklists staff facing mobile application, I hope that my experiences throughout my education and career as well as my MSLS degree let customers know that they can trust me to work with them to build solutions for their needs as a fellow librarian peer and a true advocate for libraries.

Maisam

Technical Solution Consultant



How did you find your way into library sciences?

I started working at the library when I was in high school. I first started as a teen volunteer during the summer. I remember I used to sit across from the circ desk when I was a sophomore in high school and thinking “One day, I’ll work there.” I became the first teen tech at the library, so I never actually shelved books. Instead, I used to scan the local newspaper to digitize it and have it accessible to the public. I worked way up until I became the IT Supervisor at the library and received the Movers & Shakers award by LJ.

Why are libraries important to you?

Libraries are the heart of the community, a place where everyone has equal access to knowledge and resources. They welcome all who wish to learn, explore, and grow. In my city, when a child is born, they receive a book as a gift from the Friends of the Library. That child can then attend Babytime and continue engaging with the library as they grow. At every stage of life, the library offers something meaningful to support and enrich their journey.

How has your work as a librarian informed your role at Innovative?

As a librarian, I've had a lot of real-life experience. I used to be in the same shoes as my customers, so I totally get where they're coming from. That makes it easier for them to relate to me, I understand their pain points and what they need to make their lives (and their communities) better. Back at the library, I was a development and beta partner with Innovative. Libraries would come to me to demo new products, and eventually I thought, "Why not just do this full-time?" 😊



Nathan

Senior Implementation Consultant

How did you find your way into library sciences?

It might be more accurate to say library science found me on two occasions, two inflection points that set me on the path that led to earning a Master of Library & Information Science degree from the University of Texas at Austin in 1994.

The first inflection point was being selected for one of the student worker positions in the library at my elementary school. The school librarian ensured we had the knowledge and skills needed to manage that library without constant supervision. She thought of us, and gave us the confidence to think of ourselves, as the staff of that library. This was such an empowering and positive experience, years later when I was looking for after-school work, I only applied for positions at the local library; I didn't even consider doing anything else.

The second inflection point occurred near the end of my undergraduate studies. I was still working at the local library in a full-time position, Inter-Library Loan Assistant. I can clearly remember the single sentence which nudged me in the right direction. My manager, and mentor, Valerie Thwing said, "You've worked at the library for a few years in a few different positions, if this is something you enjoy, you should consider library school."

"What's a library school?", I replied. And so I took advantage of a benefit the library offered, took an extended leave of absence, and spent a year in Austin, Texas earning my MLIS; possibly the single best decision I have ever made.

Why are libraries important to you?

For me, what's important is how a library makes the world a bit better, and sometimes do extraordinary things working with very limited resources. The Central Arkansas Library System (CALs), where I worked, is a medium-sized public in a state where libraries are not well-funded and where poverty and low education outcomes are significant issues and I'll share two CALs initiatives as examples of the extraordinary services libraries sometimes offer.

Count UP

<https://cals.org/tutoring>

Compared to national averages, student math scores in Arkansas are very low. The Count UP program was developed to tackle the problem, one student at a time, by matching volunteer tutors with struggling K-12 students, at no cost to the student or their family. The demand is so high the available tutoring hours are almost always completely full.

Rock It! Lab

<https://cals.org/rock-it-lab/>

Rock It! Lab's (RIL) vision is audacious; the best way to alleviate generational poverty is by starting a business. In a single physical location, under-resourced entrepreneurs are given the tools, guidance, and training necessary to start, grow, and scale their businesses. Resources such as technical assistance, mentorship, marketing and promotion, networking opportunities, business education, one-on-one instruction are all provided free-of-charge. RIL also provides access to capital with microloans, which are reviewed

based on the market viability of the business plan the loan will be used to support, of up to \$25,000 funded through the Imani Fund.

How has your work as a librarian informed your role at Innovative?

My career is somewhat unusual, other than a few summer jobs early in life, I've worked for only two organizations, the Central Arkansas system and Innovative/Clarivate. At CALS I started as a part-time Page, ended as one of the two Deputy Executive Directors, and worked in many other roles in between. The deep experience with US public library operations I gained during my years at CALS keeps me focused on why what we do at Clarivate is important, because I know that our library products are used by libraries all over the world, every day, to help manage library operations and if by making managing library operations more efficient, our libraries have more time to focus on the community they serve, and the needs of that community. My education and experience acts as a daily reminder that by helping libraries, we help the people they serve.