Workforce Issues in Library and Information Science 3 (WILIS 3):
Supporting and Sustaining Future LIS Workforce Research

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Background

The goals of the WILIS 3 project are to:

a) create publically accessible datasets from the WILIS 1 and WILIS 2 projects;
b) develop an interactive data system that will enable Library and Information Science (LIS) programs to both explore their own data and benchmark with other programs;
c) develop a collaborative approach to data sharing by sustaining and expanding these data collection and archiving efforts and integrating with other LIS statistical data collections;
d) produce a best practices toolkit for data archiving;
e) develop a model for other IMLS grant holders to support future LIS research and data sharing.

WILIS 3 builds on the WILIS 2 project which designed and implemented an alumni survey that all LIS programs can potentially use. The WILIS 2 web-based survey gathered data from recent graduates of 39 LIS programs in North America about their educational and work histories, satisfaction with LIS as a career, and continuing education needs. For a list of all participating programs please visit http://www.wilis.unc.edu.

Methods

The WILIS 3 project brings together various stakeholders who have an interest in archiving research data for public use, educator use and researcher use. Like the WILIS 2 project, WILIS 3 involves collaboration among ALISE, other LIS professional organizations, and the WILIS 2 participating LIS programs. Our major partners include Survey Sciences Group (SSG), a web survey company, and the Odum Institute for Research in the Social Sciences. Each partner brings a unique perspective to the development of systems and processes to effectively archive LIS research data.

• Researcher perspective (WILIS team) – survey logic, needs of LIS stakeholders, human subjects protection, analysis needs.
• Data collection perspective (SSG) – software, data structure, sample management, methodological issues.
• Data archivist perspective (Odum) – standards for data preservation, Dataverse interface and capabilities, ingesting process.

http://www.wilis.unc.edu/ Funded by a grant from

Type of Data Available via WILIS 3 Data Archive

Deans, directors, and chairs of participating programs have received de-identified datasets, a summary report of text responses, frequency tables for each survey question, and a graphical summary report that compares their results with those for all other programs combined. The archive will make the following type of data available to researchers and educators.

- Demographic summaries
  - 78% female
  - 17% non-white
  - Age distribution:

- Program evaluations, career paths, and job satisfaction
  - Most graduates (84%) rate their overall LIS program experience as "good" or "excellent."
  - Most graduates (74%) find a job within 3 months after graduation.
  - The vast majority of LIS graduates (78%) are working in jobs that use their LIS skills/knowledge.

- Most common current job settings

Other job settings

• Nearly all LIS graduates (88%) are satisfied with LIS as a career and anticipate staying in the field over the next 3 years (91%).

Potential Benefits of a Data Archive

• Increase return-on-investment for funders and principal investigators by supporting re-use of data sets by students and other researchers.
• Inform strategic planning by stakeholders and thereby more effectively educate and manage the LIS workforce.
• Foster evidence-based practice by allowing program administrators to access to their own data and create comparison groups for benchmarking purposes.

⁴ Selected results on poster are from the 39 WILIS 2 programs. Overall response rate was 40.5% (n=3507).