



Info Pros in 2021: are we virtual yet?

Mary Ellen Bates
BatesInfo.com

July 21, 2011

2011
2012
2013
2014
2015

Human beats computer



2011
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Computer beats human





Can we beat Watson?

Computers still can't offer insight



"Flash Crash" of May 2010

1000-point drop in 6 hours!

Apple stock: \$100,000/share

Accenture: \$.01/share

Cause: algorithmic trading

Now, human circuit-breakers

We control the machines

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On to 2021.....



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Bad news/good news

Gas is \$50/gallon

Broadband is ubiquitous

"Commuting is so 2011"

Most people work at home or local pods



Bad news/good news

The predict-and-control management model doesn't work

Digital natives drive the workplace culture

"Challenge me!" "Let me learn new skills!" "What else can I do?"

Your job is re-invented every 12 months



Everything's in the cloud



File → New opens a file in the cloud

Collaboration is the default



Virtual spaces

People routinely meet virtually

"Does this hologram make me look fat?"

Team skills essential



Virtual spaces

Info pros *present* their results to clients

Making info interesting is essential



Workplace changes

Outsourcing of non-core jobs

Accounting in Kiev

PR in Manila

Advertising in Kuala Lumpur

Sales in Santiago

Are your services *seen* as core?

Are you sure?



Info overload⁽³⁾

High-quality real-time translation

Machines understand multimedia

Content EXPLOSION!



"*Virtual libraries*" is redundant

All govt info is open data

Hard copy? *Fuggedaboutit*

Oversaturation of content → demand
for nuggetization™

"Don't make me read all this!"

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Interacting with info



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Lots more Watsons

Huge need for data in formats that are meaningful to Watson

They data-mine what we can't

Humans still bring perspective, non-linear thinking

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The new reference desk?



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**"But I've got HIGH-QUALITY,
RELIABLE, AUTHORITATIVE
INFORMATION!**

Isn't that worth something?"



We've already got content!

Digital natives were born immersed in
info

Challenge? Mining the information



We've already got content!

Consumers determine when, where,
how they consume info

Crowd-sourced news

Does "authoritative" matter?



Info pros, arise!

Our skill set:

Curious, neutral, persistent, analytical,
perceptive

We become Google-proof, Watson-proof

"Intelligence filters to the info-sphere"

MLIS programs wildly popular



The 2021 Info Pro

MLIS required courses:

Data visualization

Research-bot design

Virtual presentation skills

Job titles:

Strategic Analyst

Digital Curator

VP of Info and Watsons



The 2021 (or 2012) Info Pro

How will *you* have re-invented yourself?

gained 3 new skills

taken the lead on something scary

conducted 3 informational interviews

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Have fun!



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