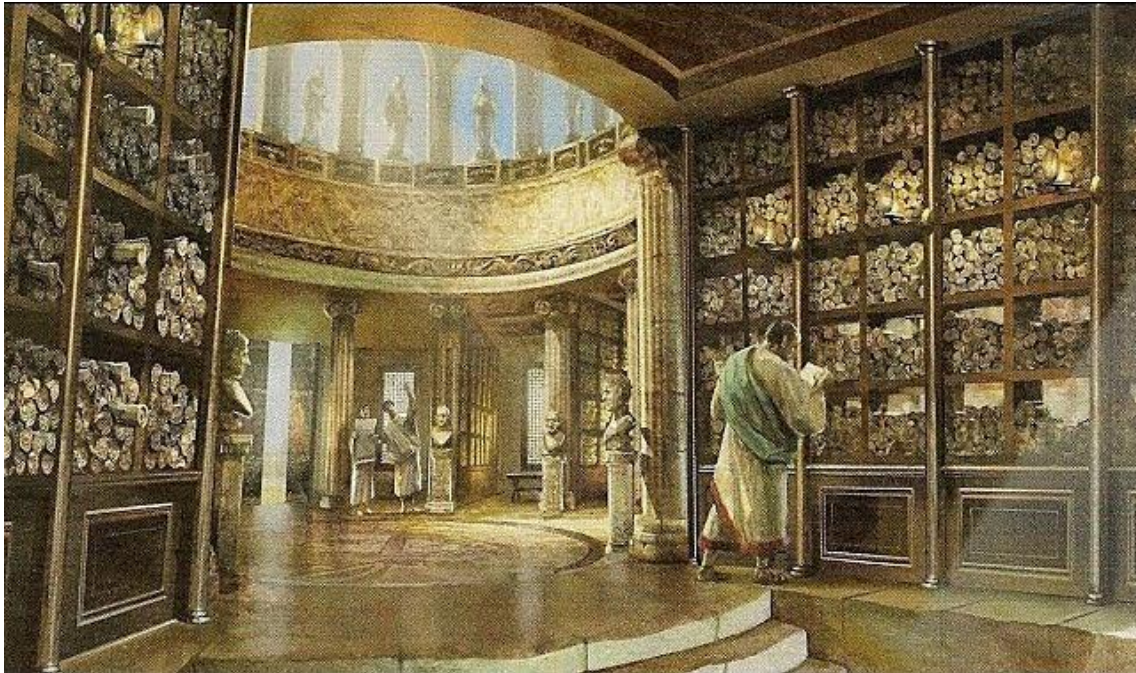




OVERDUE | MYTH BUSTING

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I used to believe libraries were, in the strictest sense, book repositories. What I've come to understand is that they are far more than that, now serving as vital community resource centers. That gap felt worth exploring through a few common misconceptions and sharing what I've learned.

Myth #1: Libraries were always meant for public use

Libraries didn't begin as places for public use. Often cited as the very first major library, The Library of Ashurbanipal, built in the 7th century BCE, was a royal collection, built to gather knowledge from conquered lands and was reserved for the king and his inner circle. The Library of Alexandria, founded in the 3rd century BCE by Ptolemy I Soter, also served a select group of elite scholars rather than the public.

For much of history, knowledge wasn't something you accessed. It was controlled.

Access began to shift in the mid-1800s, when the United Kingdom's Public Libraries Act of 1850 enabled free, tax-supported libraries. Over time, libraries evolved from quiet collections into active, living spaces that teach, connect, and support their communities.

Today, libraries offer far more than information. They provide guidance, opportunity, and a sense of place for those who need it.

Myth #2: Librarians can only work in a library

Each U.S. state has its own requirements, and many require formal training, including an MLS or MLIS.

Graduates are trained as information professionals with skills that translate across industries. For example, tech companies hire taxonomists to shape how content is organized, discovered, and understood at scale, improving how people interact with information every day.

You'll find MLS and MLIS graduates in technology, data, marketing, publishing, museums, archives, government, and nonprofits. Anywhere information needs to be organized and shared clearly, they have a role.

In many ways, they are architects of information.

Myth #3: Libraries are places to read and study only

Libraries will always be known for books and quiet spaces. But that's only part of the story.

Many offer career support, training, meeting spaces, workshops, classes, language programs, and internet access. They are evolving into community engagement centers shaped by the needs of the people they serve.

For some, that means help finding a job or building new skills. For others, it's access to technology, language learning, or a place to connect with others.

And for many, it's something even more basic: a reliable, welcoming space in a world that doesn't always offer one.

In many cases, libraries are not just resources but anchors within their communities.

I hope you've enjoyed exploring these myths. Next week, I'll explore the tech side of an MLS/MLIS and how it connects to my experience.

This has been OVERDUE. Come back next week to keep your account in good standing.

#Libraries #Librarians #Librarianship #InformationScience #LifelongLearning