



Body of Professional Knowledge
Setting out an adaptable and flexible framework for your changing needs

Introduction



Every professional organisation requires a knowledge base, which describes the specialist subject knowledge that practitioners are expected to acquire for current and future professional practice. The knowledge base defined in this paper has been adopted by CILIP (Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals) and establishes the unique knowledge, which distinguishes library and information professionals from professionals within other domains.

CILIP refers to the knowledge base as the Body of Professional Knowledge (BPK).

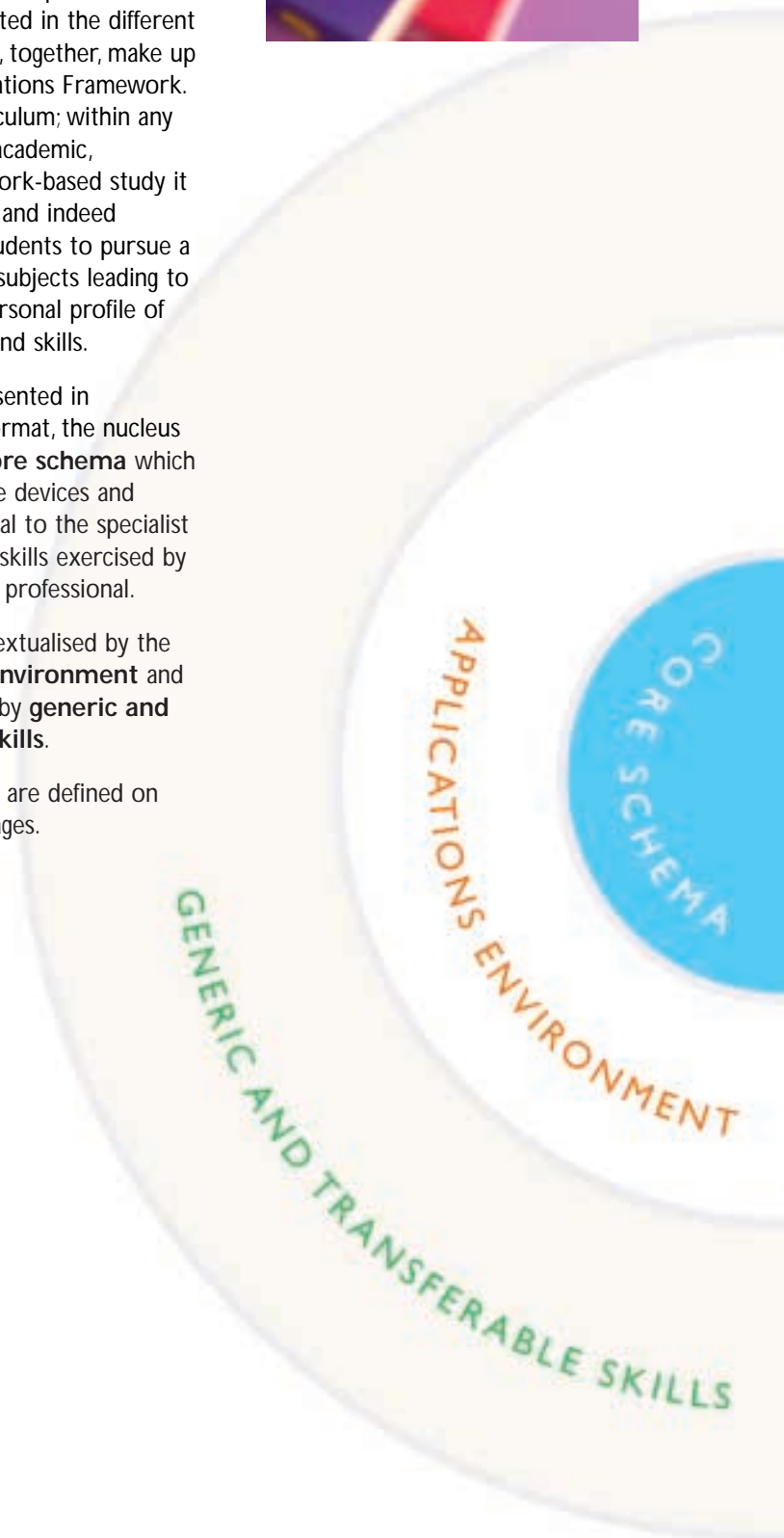
The BPK sets out the broad framework of areas of knowledge and practice that characterise information and library work. It is designed to be flexible and adaptable, as the areas will evolve and develop over time to accommodate changing needs. It is appropriate to library and information professionals across the sector as a whole. It also has a degree of overlap with the knowledge bases of other professions, such as the British Computer Society, UK Council for Health Information Professionals and the Records Management Society, whose activities are also concerned with those carried out in the library and information environments.

The BPK includes generic areas of knowledge where they are integral to the core concepts. It does not indicate the level of knowledge or skill that should be achieved by individual practitioners seeking recognition and/or qualifications; these are indicated in the different documents that, together, make up CILIP's Qualifications Framework. It is not a curriculum; within any programme of academic, vocational or work-based study it will be possible and indeed desirable for students to pursue a wider range of subjects leading to an enhanced personal profile of understanding and skills.

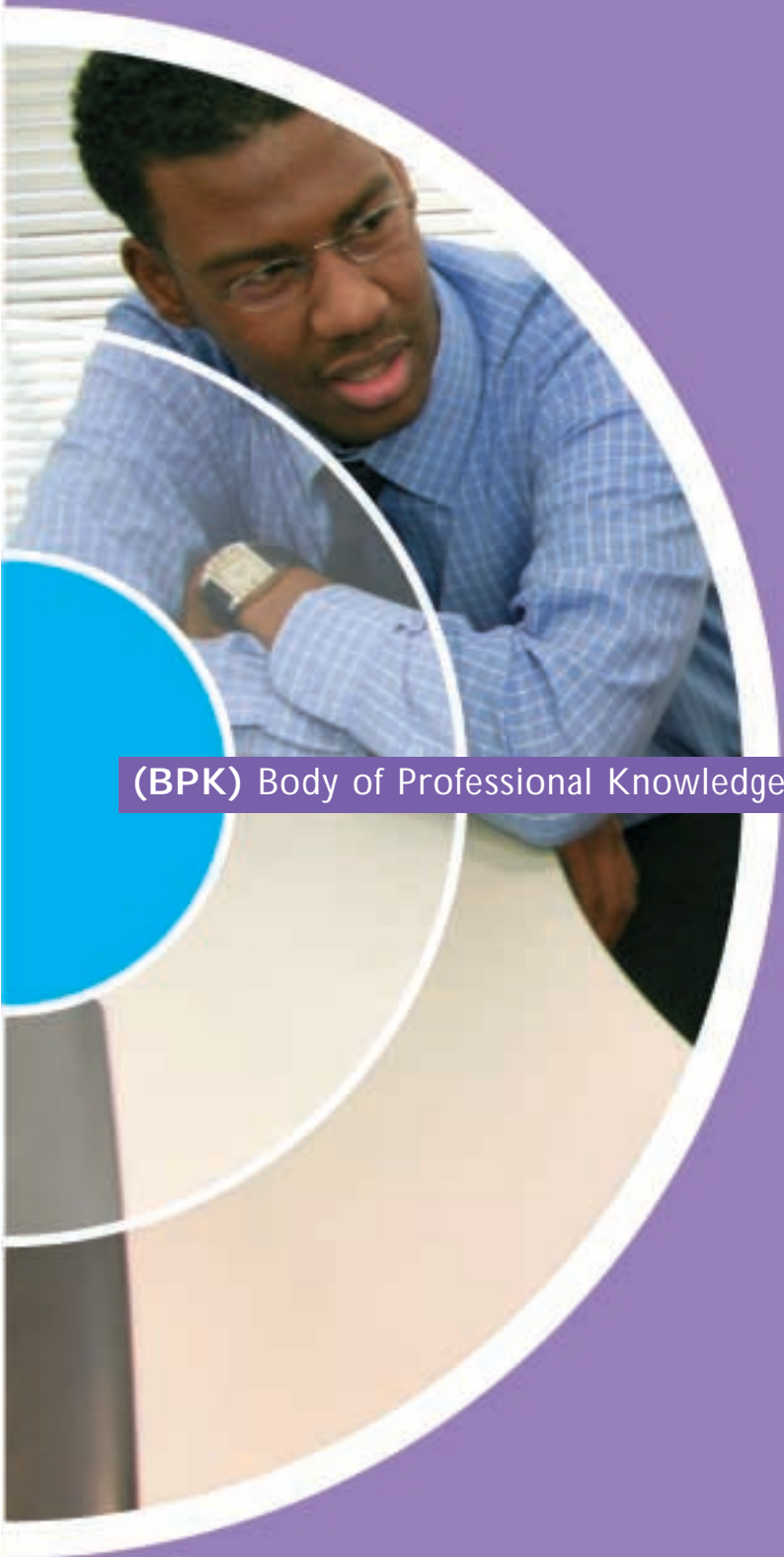
The BPK is presented in diagrammatic format, the nucleus of which is a **core schema** which comprises those devices and processes central to the specialist knowledge and skills exercised by the information professional.

These are contextualised by the **applications environment** and complemented by **generic and transferable skills**.

These elements are defined on the following pages.

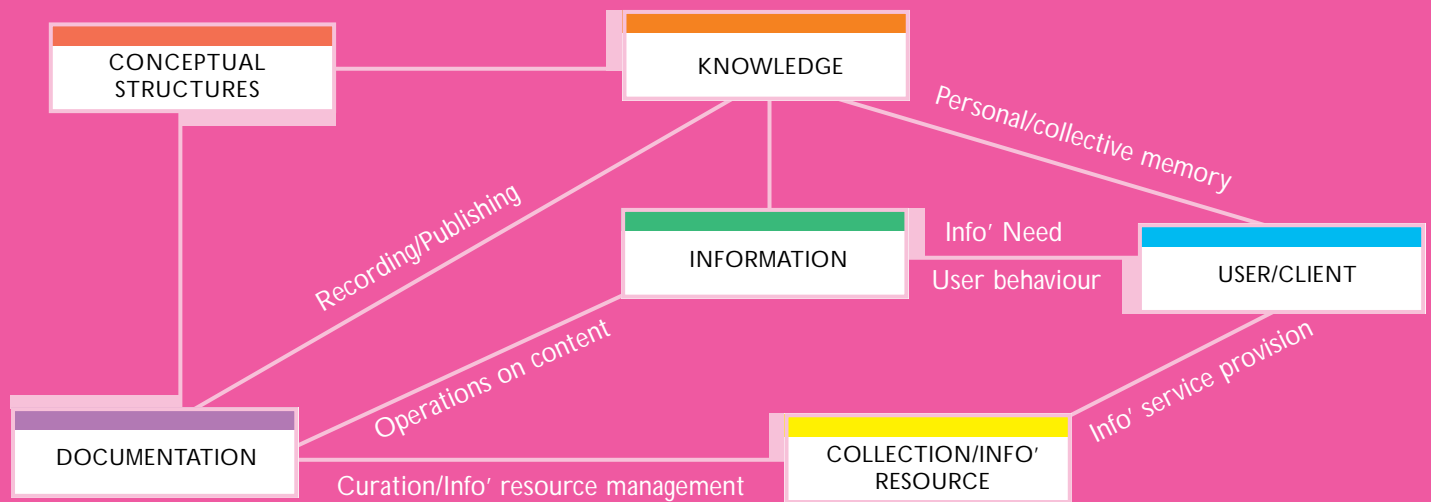


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(BPK) Body of Professional Knowledge

Core Schema



The core schema incorporates a set of fundamental components and operations which link those components. The components are represented as rectangles in the diagram below, and the operations are shown as labels on the links between the components.

The root component is *knowledge*, which encompasses the shared beliefs and understandings of the individual (*personal memory*) and of society as a whole (*collective memory*). Knowledge is *represented* and *organised* by means of *conceptual structures*, notably classification schemes, taxonomies and ontologies, and vocabulary control devices such as thesauri, by means of which society - or a part of society - are provided with a semantic map of their world.

Documentation is that part of knowledge which is *recorded* symbolically **as data structures** in any medium. The generation and dissemination of documentation includes processes, institutions and

infrastructure associated with *publishing*. By means of *subject indexing* the information professional can represent and locate the semantic content of any item of documentation in terms of conceptual knowledge structures.

The process of *communication* by means of which knowledge can be *transmitted* enables *information* to be generated for the benefit of *users* or *clients*. The relationship between information and its users is enriched by understandings about *information need* and *user behaviour*. Information generation is also facilitated by *operations on document content*. These operations include metadata construction; content analysis and representation; abstracting; indexing; content evaluation; secondary processing, such as digitisation, structural tagging and mark-up, and hypertext linkage.

Where organised bodies (*collections*) of documentation exist their *curation* involves

aspects of *information resource management* including selection, acquisition and disposal of items; storage/display provision; cataloguing in accordance with international or local standards; classification; metadata construction; provision of physical and/or logical access to content; preservation and records management.

Access to, and exploitation of such collections on behalf of specific user/ client communities employs techniques in *information service provision*. Subsumed here are principles and practice which reflect and promote **information literacy**, including information retrieval, data mining, information brokerage, website and portal design and maintenance, and, in general, the information architecture which provides the framework within which information resources are created, analysed, evaluated, moderated and manipulated in order to meet the requirements of users and clients.

Applications environment

The information professional practises within a specific environment in which ethical, legal, policy and organisational issues need to be understood at an appropriate level. In addition, domain-specific knowledge will be required as a complement to his/her knowledge and skills in information management.

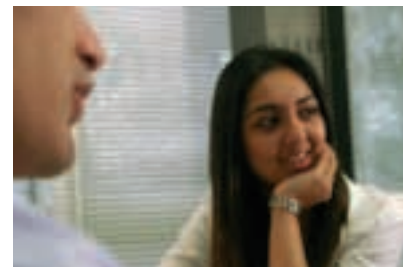
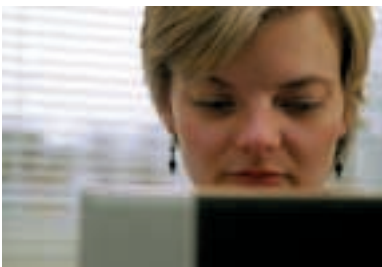
The *ethical framework* encompasses professional standards and codes of practice; the proper relationship between information providers and their clients; acknowledgement of personal responsibility for professional actions; conformity with the law, both generally and specifically; respect for human rights and lifestyles of clients and colleagues.

The *legal dimension* engages the information professional with the law relating to data protection, freedom of information, environmental information regulations, intellectual property; libel, obscenity and defamation; discrimination; right of access to information; breach of confidence, right of privacy and aspects of the law – such as employment, equal opportunities, contracts and licensing, health and safety, copyright and other intellectual property rights, and computer 'misuse' .

Information policy concerns those provisions and regulations which determine or delimit access to information and information media, facilitate or prevent the dissemination of information, and relate to information law.

Information governance assures the enactment of policies, standards and strategies for the ethical use of information and adherence to relevant legislation at the level of the organisation.

The *communications perspective* provides oversight of the dynamics of information flow in society, in and between regions, nations, governments and the broad span of information industries.



Generic and transferable skills

In order to apply specialist and domain-specific knowledge and skills the information professional may need a range of generic and transferable skills, including computer and information literacy, interpersonal skills; management skills, especially relating to human and financial resources; marketing ability; training and mentoring skills; and familiarity with research methods.



Further information

If you require any further information on any aspect of the Body of Professional Knowledge please contact:

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