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**SI 643:  
Professional Practice in Libraries  
and Information Centers**

Overview of SI 643—1/8/09

Prof. Joan C. Durrance

Margaret Mann Collegiate Professor of  
Information

# Factors That Influence Professional Practice:

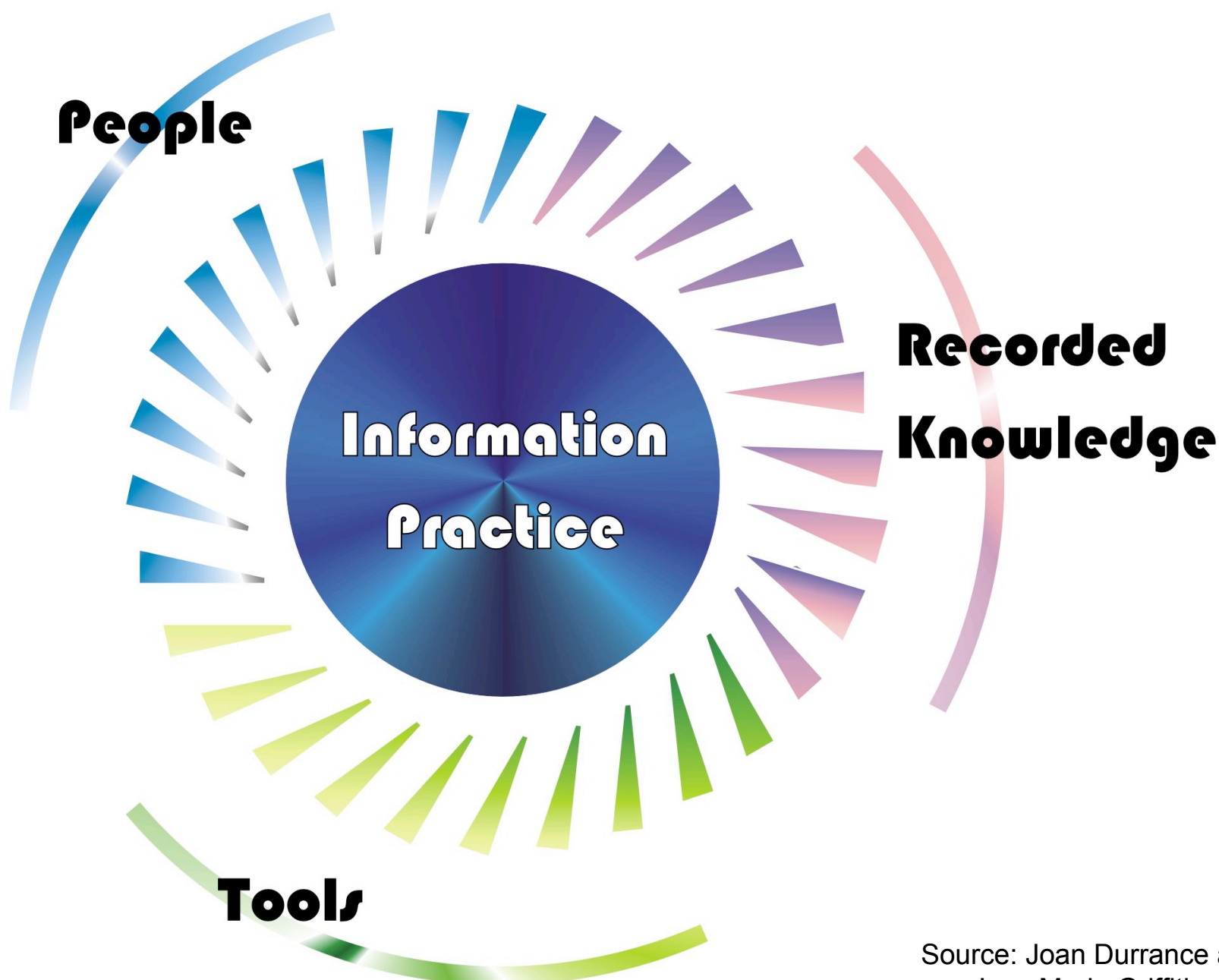
- Phenomena of interest and concern to the profession
- Client needs, situations, approaches
- External factors (technology change, perceptions, etc)
- Environments
- Frameworks
- Values, beliefs
- Tools
- Strategies used to carry out roles
- The nature & growth of the knowledge base
- Education for the profession

# Practice is Influenced Professional Values-Ethics

- Ethics statements reflect values
- They reflect practice as well as influence it
- 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Ethics Statement of the American Library Association
- <http://www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/offices/oif/ifgroups/cope/codeofethicscelebrat/index.cfm>

# What Knowledge, Skills, Competencies Do Librarians Need?

- This semester we will look at commonalities and differences
- Today we'll start looking at competencies
- You'll find some of your own in the Job Analysis project



Source: Joan Durrance and  
Jose Marie Griffiths

## LIS/IS Research Areas

Information Technology	Content-Collections	Info Systems	Info Behavior	Cross-Cutting
IT capabilities and limitations IT innovations Issues; legal questions Impacts of IT Identifying and selecting ITs Human factors in technology Specific ITs such as the Internet and web	Defining the nature of information Life-cycle of information Publishing (incl. digital) Physical & virtual collections Costing & pricing of info & info services Value-added functions Bibliometrics; webmetrics	Info storage retrieval Computers info systems User-centered design Organiz. of knowledge/info Increasing system capability Srch/retrieval models DB/ file structure System interfaces Use	Info needs/seeking Info use Human info interaction Info literacy Communication Design of services Professional practice Outcomes	Info Use Environs Historical aspects Management approaches and concerns Evaluation approaches and issues Information policy Methods

# Knowledge, Skills, Strategies of Librarians

- Librarians need a big picture view
- Understand information behavior
- Organizational knowledge/skills
- Retrieval expertise
- Help people use information
- Devise external strategies
- Facilitate information literacy
- Devise strategies to increase access to info
- Librarians add value to information



# The Big Picture View of “Information and Recorded Knowledge”

Includes:

- Information creation,
- Formats/technology used for information and knowledge
- Evaluation, selection, and ‘collection’ or increasing access to collections.
- Information/knowledge environments.
- Issues/activities associated with current knowledge/information formats and environments.

# Librarians Should Understand People and Their Information Behavior

This includes:

- Assessment and understanding of environments and information behavior.
- Information needs/behavior and factors that influence behavior
- Techniques for determining need;
- Barriers and ways of overcoming them
- Analysis of information behavior of selected clientele.
- Types of Information Use

# Librarians Increase Access to Resources & Info by Organizing & Representing Content

Including:

- Concepts and techniques for representing the content and structure of information resources;
- Principles and practices which are used to identify appropriate parameters to serve as access points and associated labels to describe them;
- Organizing and representing information/knowledge (physical and virtual).
- Classification, cataloging, website creation/maintenance, metadata.

# Librarians Increase Access by Expert Use of Retrieval Tools & Approaches

- Information search and retrieval tools and approaches.
  - Including commercial online retrieval systems and World Wide Web search engines & browsing services;
- Knowledge of data base searching components: database selection, search strategy development, and evaluation of search results;
- Systems command languages, controlled vocabulary, making the complex look simple.

# Librarians Help People Use Knowledge and Information

- By using interviewing & communication techniques—especially the Reference Interview
  - Understanding the use of questioning techniques, the reference interview, stages in interviews, communication processes.
  - Specialized interviews whose aim is to assist in problem identification.
- Finding out what the need is and then selecting the approaches to use to respond to that need.
- Venues: in-person or virtually

# Librarians Devise a Variety of External Strategies to Carry Out Their Work

- Website Presence and Digital Reference
- Distance Learning
- Assisting remote users
- Marketing Strategies
- Raising awareness about/increasing the visibility librarians as information professionals; libraries as vital societal institutions.
- Linking and referral; information and referral.
- Making connections/collaboration;
- Developing strategic partnerships.

# Librarians Facilitate Information Literacy

- Helping people (kids & adults) evaluate information & gain a variety of information literacy skills
- Education; Individual and group instruction.
- Specialized training, such as Internet training for the public.
- *Term Paper Assistance* in academic libraries, etc.
- Programming:
  - Age-based (or class level) programming;
  - Need-based program development (such as ESL, Literacy Instruction)
- Informing those who don't necessarily "come in"

# Librarians **Add Value** to Information As:

- Advocates-represent user in creation of info systems & policies; safeguard equal access to info & IF
- Consultants-advise/guide users in problem solving; provide informed context for decision making.
- Designers-create actual and virtual collections & construct info systems that require little or no learning time
- Educators-teach and empower individuals to manage the information process.

– (Betty Bengston, Past-Pres. ARL; Ret. Dir. Univ of Wash Library)



# Questions To Contemplate in SI 643

- What problems **do/will** librarians/info professionals seek to solve? What roles **do/will** they undertake?
- How do/will environments and technologies influence practice?
- What factors and issues influence practice?
- What contributions does research make to professional practice? What are researchable problems?
- What are/will be the competencies of librarians?
- How do ethics and values influence practice?
- What knowledge, skills and attitudes do/will information professionals need?
- What approaches are used to design effective practice? How do we know what is effective?

# Selected Professional Association Competency Lists

<http://www.sla.org/content/learn/comp2003/index.cfm>

Special/corporate librarians (1997-2003)

<https://www.mlanet.org/education/platform/skills.html>

Medical Library Association (pioneering)

[www.aserl.org/statements/competencies/competencies.pdf](http://www.aserl.org/statements/competencies/competencies.pdf)

ASERL Competencies for Research Librarians.

<http://www.ala.org/ala/yalsa/profdev/youngadultsdeserve.cfm>

Youth librarians--1981-2003

<http://www.aallnet.org/prodev/competencies.asp> AALL. American

Assn of Law librarians (2001)

FYI Google competency & your type of librarian/archivist; See also  
McKinney (2006)