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\textsuperscript{th} 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
## LIS/IS Research Areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information Technology</th>
<th>Content-Collections</th>
<th>Info Systems</th>
<th>Info Behavior</th>
<th>Cross-Cutting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IT capabilities and limitations</td>
<td>Defining the nature of information</td>
<td>Info storage retrieval</td>
<td>Info needs/seeking</td>
<td>Info Use Environ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT innovations Issues; legal questions</td>
<td>Life-cycle of information</td>
<td>Computers info systems</td>
<td>Info use</td>
<td>Historical aspects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impacts of IT</td>
<td>Publishing (incl. digital)</td>
<td>User-centered design</td>
<td>Human info interaction</td>
<td>Management approaches and concerns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying and selecting ITs</td>
<td>Physical &amp; virtual collections</td>
<td>Organiz. of knowledge/info</td>
<td>Info literacy Communication</td>
<td>Evaluation approaches and issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human factors in technology</td>
<td>Costing &amp; pricing of info &amp; info services</td>
<td>Increasing system capability</td>
<td>Design of services</td>
<td>Information policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific ITs such as the Internet and web</td>
<td>Value-added functions</td>
<td>Srch/retrievl models</td>
<td>Professional practice</td>
<td>Methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliometrics; webmetrics</td>
<td>Bibliometrics; webmetrics</td>
<td>DB/ file structure</td>
<td>Outcomes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 database 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 of 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
https://www.mlanet.org/education/platform/skills.html
Medical Library Association (pioneering)
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
FYI Google competency & your type of librarian/archivist; See also McKinney (2006)