

Fall 2008 Comprehensive Exam Questions
October 24 and 25, 2008

October 24, Day 1:

Question One. Discuss the importance of information literacy for a defined patron community within a library setting of your choice. Describe two instructional strategies that promote information literacy within that community. How would you use technology to support your instructional strategies? Include references to the literature as appropriate.

Question Two. In the most recent *Horizon Report* from the New Media Consortium, there were five emerging trends that the New Media Consortium recommended information professionals should be aware of. They were: 1) grassroots video (e.g., YouTube), 2) social networking (e.g., FaceBook), 3) mobile broadband (e.g., web-enabled cell phones), 4) data mash-ups (e.g., Google Earth), 5) collective intelligence (e.g., Wikipedia).

- a) Provide a brief description of one of these emerging trends. Describe one possible ethical or legal issue that librarians and information professionals need to consider and address with respect to this trend.
- b) More generally, what strategies will you use in your professional life to keep up with the rapid pace of technological change?
- c) Include references to the literature as appropriate.

Question Three. Online public access catalogs, periodical indexes and databases, and free Web search engines are important tools for information seekers. Select two of these tools. Compare and contrast them in terms of 1) the types of materials they index, 2) the subject disciplines they cover, 3) the ways they provide descriptions of information objects in their systems, and 4) how they enable users to access information and navigate the information environments. Within your discussion, explain when the user should use each tool. Include references to the literature as appropriate.

Question Four. Define “nonverbal communication”. Discuss three ways that nonverbal communication can enhance the quality of face-to-face reference interactions. Provide two examples of the types of messages that may be conveyed nonverbally, and the means by which they are conveyed nonverbally. Describe two strategies you can use in a virtual setting to compensate for the lack of nonverbal communication. Include references to the literature as appropriate.

Question Five. Preservation is an important activity necessary for ensuring long-term access to resources and information. Libraries and information centers collect information in analog and digital formats. Compare and contrast 3 challenges faced in providing long-term access to information in these two formats. Explain how these challenges affect the steps and procedures involved in preservation. Include references to the literature as appropriate.

October 25, Day 2:

Question One. Define authority control. Identify an example of an information retrieval system where authority control is practiced and explain how it contributes to information access. Identify an example of some other information retrieval system where authority control is absent and what impact that has on information access. Include references to the literature as appropriate.

Question Two. LIS professionals are often involved in projects to acquire, implement or substantially upgrade an information system in their organizations. Identify three important examples of knowledge, skills and abilities that you will bring to these efforts. Explain how you will apply them and why they are important. Include references to the literature as appropriate.

Question Three. Libraries, archives and information centers continue to evolve in response to social, technological and financial changes. Select a library, archive, or information center. Identify an important change that is now occurring, or is forecast to occur in the next five years. Describe how you, as an LIS professional, can prepare for and respond to this change and provide leadership to manage this change in your organization (whether or not you are in a management role). Include references to the literature as appropriate.

Question Four. The statistics your library has collected for the last five years shows a 3% per year drop in the number of people walking through the front door and a 5% per year drop in the number of people walking up to the reference desk to ask a reference question. When the director of your institution (principal, CEO, University President, etc.) saw these numbers she was puzzled and subsequently asked you, the director of the library, to write a report justifying the value of the library to the institution. Identify and explain the types of data you could include in this report and how it could be used to substantiate the worth of the library to its user community. In addition, describe your library's important stakeholders and how the content of your report could be effectively communicated to them. Include references to the literature as appropriate.

Question Five. Global initiatives such as the One Laptop Per Child program aim to make low-cost computers widely available to students in the developing world. Describe one potential benefit of these types of initiatives in the area of library services or access to online resources. Describe one potential challenge (e.g., economic, political, cultural or social) that must be overcome. Explain how LIS professionals can contribute to addressing it. Include references to the literature as appropriate.