

SPRING 2011 COMPREHENSIVE EXAM

DAY 1

FRIDAY, MARCH 24, 2011

1. A common feature of social media sites is tagging, which enables users to assign keywords as metadata for content such as images, bookmarks, blogs, videos, books and articles. It is claimed that tags have the potential to improve information retrieval. Describe the characteristics of tags as metadata. Compare and contrast tags to controlled vocabularies. Describe one strength and one weakness when using tags as metadata. Explain how you might address the weakness to make tags more effective for information retrieval. Include references to the literature as appropriate.
(competency: Information organization)
2. Information seekers face numerous challenges when trying to find information in library resources and archival collections. Summarize the challenges users face. Explain how librarians and information professionals apply digital technology to overcome these challenges and make collections more discoverable. Include references to the literature as appropriate.
(competency: Technology)
3. S.R. Ranganathan wrote that "Every person in charge of a library must be capable of teaching." For a contemporary library, archive, or information services setting of your choice, discuss the nature and importance of the information professional's teaching role, and include an explanation of two areas of knowledge or competency that the information professional must possess in order to be an effective teacher. Include references to the literature as appropriate.
(Competencies: Information Services).
4. For a historically underserved library/information user group of your choice, identify three unique characteristics of their information needs or information behaviors. Describe and critique two information services, provided physically or online, for your selected group. Explain how to assess and improve these services to ensure that their needs are being met. Include references to the literature as appropriate.
(Competencies: Services)
5. Congress will soon debate whether to extend controversial provisions of the USA Patriot Act. Passage of the bill would continue to give law enforcement officers permission to ask a special federal court for access to "any tangible thing" that includes library circulation records. Imagine you were summoned to appear before Congress in support of the stance of the library and information science profession. Discuss how these provisions have affected libraries since Congress first passed the bill in 2001. Offer in detail, three compelling reasons why you think this bill should pass or not. Include references to the literature as appropriate.
(Competency: Professional Identity)

DAY 2
Saturday, March 26, 2011

6. Many libraries and information centers have established web sites. The usability of these sites is critical to their success. Define what usability means in this context. Describe a total of three usability heuristics or quantitative measures that may be used to assess a web site. For a library or information setting of your choice, explain why each heuristic or measure is valuable and how it would be applied. Include references to the literature as appropriate.

(Competency: technology)

7. A recent report by the Association of Research Libraries concludes that librarians in academic and research libraries are hampered in fulfilling their mission by uncertainties over the interpretation of "Fair Use." Provide an operational definition of "Fair Use" and specify the fundamental issues involved in a judgment of whether a particular situation constitutes "Fair Use" or not. Discuss the reasons for these uncertainties in the interpretation of "Fair Use." Finally, discuss how you will advise your patrons about "Fair Use" in a professional setting of your choice. Include references to the literature as appropriate.

(Competencies: Information Services, Professional Identity)

8. Advocacy and outreach are increasingly important. Within a library or information setting of your choice, explain why they are important. Describe two outreach or advocacy activities and their target audiences. Explain how you would measure the outcomes of these activities. Justify your choices based on how they advance the mission and goals of the organization. Include references to the literature as appropriate.

(Competencies: Professional identity, Management)

9. Libraries, archives, and many other cultural organizations are interested in developing digitization projects/initiatives. For a library or information setting of your choice, describe the purposes of digitization projects. Discuss challenges that information professionals face in developing digitization projects and challenges users face in accessing digitized resources. Explain how such challenges should be addressed during project development and implementation. Include references to the literature as appropriate.

(Technology, resources, services)

10. Many libraries and other information centers are engaging with social networking applications like Facebook and Twitter. For a library or information setting of your choice, describe the benefits and risks of engaging with these two applications. Explain the issues to consider when deciding whether to establish a Facebook and Twitter presence for your organization. How would participation change the nature of interaction between information professionals and patrons? Include references to the literature as appropriate.

(Competencies : Technology, Services)