
Library and Information Science Education at IUPUI

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This fall, two events occurred at Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis (IUPUI) that are potentially of high interest to librarians in Indiana. Indiana University's School of Library and Information Science (SLIS) on the Bloomington campus launched an expansion of its program on the IUPUI campus, and the IUPUI University Libraries began their first semester of operation in the new "electronic" library building. The new library and the expanding SLIS program at IUPUI, together, make a statement about the centrality and the future of library and information services on campuses and, in a broader sense, in society itself. The purpose of this article is to provide the Indiana library community with an update on SLIS's program in Indianapolis and on the resources of the new library which furnishes an illuminating context for discussing SLIS-IUPUI's directions.

University Libraries at IUPUI

The new University Libraries building is the culmination of a broad-based planning process led by Barbara Fischler, Director of the IUPUI University Libraries, and including library staff, university computer and systems staff, university administration, community leaders, and prominent national information experts and consultants. Their task was to envision a library that would meet the needs of IUPUI students and faculty in an information environment that is already, and will increasingly be, pluralistic—a conglomeration

of traditional and increasingly electronic forms and formats, accessible by tools and technologies that are familiar and many that are new. Effective learning, teaching, and research will depend on being able to use this diverse mix well. The knowledge and skills required to create an effective infrastructure for use of tools, technologies, and information resources are also increasingly pluralistic and will require the team work and cooperation of many types of information professionals.

In the new library, print, paper, and electronic cultures share a home where they can interact synergistically. Computer technology and networked electronic and multimedia resources are available throughout the building, side by side with print resources. Information professionals with many specialties have their offices in the new building—librarians with a broad range of traditional and electronic knowledge and skills, archivists, computer and instructional systems specialists, and others. A visitor to the new library will see all the traditional print-based library services that are familiar, housed in a functional and attractive setting, and delivered with the aid of electronic information systems for both technical and public services that have become a familiar part of the library landscape. Electronic technologies, tools, sources, and services, visible at a casual glance by the presence of computer terminals, are an equally important part of the structure and operation of the new library.

The computing technology available to

users will be of three major kinds: express workstations that provide access to the Indiana University library catalog, laptops that can be checked out by all users for use anywhere in the library, and scholar's workstations that link the user to the library's information system and provide a gateway to global information sources and services. All three computing resources are interspersed with the print materials on all floors. Six hundred and forty-one user carrels provide full power for computing and network connections, allowing users to move electronically from the library to information sources all over the world. Plans for the future call for extending the internal library network to the campus and the community, thus making the "library without walls" more and more a reality.

The library's information system, now in development, brings diverse electronic capabilities to the user at many locations throughout the library. A complete description of the new system, now in prototypical phases, deserves an article on its own. Briefly, it will include a gateway to the Internet, a wide range of networked text and image resources available via a menu system, multimedia programs providing instructional support for classes, access to library catalogs globally, popular applications programs such as word processing, spreadsheets and graphics packages, and perhaps most important to the individual, electronic workspace—called an electronic book bag—where each user can take notes, download bibliographic citations, text and images, and move files back and forth from the workstation to a personal or office machine. The IUPUI library information system, a truly multimedia approach to providing information tools and resources regardless of their location, was conceived and continues to be developed by interdisciplinary teams including librarians, users, computer specialists, and a range of consultants.

The Emerging Electronic Information Environment

The IUPUI University Libraries represent planning for library services in an increasingly electronic information environment that has been both predicted and taking shape for a number of years but that now seems to be coalescing rapidly. Ubiquitous computing—reliance on electronic communication and information handling—has been a buzzword for some time and is now becoming a reality in many workplaces and for many individuals. The communications capabilities of networks are being discovered in many domains from business and education to leisure activities and recreation. Electronic books, journals, and databases are appearing with greater frequency, and new ownership, pricing and use structures are now not only being predicted and debated but are starting to emerge. The increased use of the Internet—both in volume of traffic and in sources available—is offering a view of what a world of electronic information texts might be like. Visions of this new information future are occupying an increasingly prominent place in our national consciousness. We are surrounded with descriptions of information highways, a national information infrastructure, digital libraries (which often are not our idea of libraries at all), and a vision of individuals as information consumers or even information czars, commanding empires of information opportunities from their homes.

People using information today, whether in their roles of student, teacher, worker, citizen, or individual seeking entertainment, relaxation or diversion, face the challenge of working effectively in this multi-faceted information environment, with its sometimes chaotic and confusing mixture of traditional and new information sources and tools for using and benefiting from information. For us as librarians, it has been axiomatic that learning to use information effectively is not a simple or easy task. The plethora of electronic

choices only adds complexity to what was always a complex and often not fully understood activity.

While the IUPUI library provides users with conveniently available tools, technologies, and resources to learn to use both print and electronic information effectively and synergistically, it also showcases emerging roles for libraries and librarians. The point here is not that the particular mix of print and electronic resources and services that IUPUI is evolving in its library is the "right" or the "only" road into the information future. The symbolic importance of the new library is its visible acknowledgment of the electronic information environment and its attempt to create a world where print and electronic cultures exist side by side and where professional librarians are active in helping library patrons make the best use of both.

The SLIS Program at IUPUI

Indiana University's School of Library and Information Science provides professional education for students whose careers will develop in this chaotic and rapidly shifting world of traditional and evolving information technologies, tools, sources and services. At a time when library science programs in some institutions are disappearing altogether, IU's SLIS is launching a full-scale program at IUPUI and planning for an expansion of its program at Indiana University at South Bend, as well. Just as the IUPUI library makes a statement about the centrality of library and information services in the upcoming decades, the development of the SLIS program at these two additional sites speaks with cautious optimism to the continued importance of our field in the multi-dimensional information world of the future.

The increased demand for SLIS courses in Indianapolis, the new library building, IUPUI's emphasis on the non-traditional student, professional education, and information technology, and the IUPUI

administration's interest in library and information science education offer an encouraging environment for turning the roster of SLIS offerings at IUPUI into a full-fledged program. Planned over the past year and a half by IUPUI Executive Vice Chancellor and Dean of the Faculties, William Plater, and SLIS Dean, Blaise Cronin, and with strong support from Library Director Barbara Fischler, the expanded SLIS program at IUPUI has taken visible shape this fall and will continue to develop over the next several years.

As a faculty member who has recently joined SLIS after many years as a library practitioner in Indiana and several years as a library school faculty member in Illinois, I sense that the expansion of the program is occurring in the context of a convergence of direction among faculty, SLIS administrators, Bloomington and IUPUI campus administrators, and library practitioners about what constitutes viable education for library and information professionals in the future. The description that seems to me to best fit this convergence of opinion about the direction of library and information science education is, once again, pluralism—the recognition of the emerging pluralistic information environment with its implications for traditional and emerging roles for libraries and for new information management roles outside of libraries for persons with academic knowledge and skills in library and information science.

In my view, a truly pluralistic approach to education in library and information science goes beyond simply providing a range of courses that present separate views of the library and information landscape. If we view the information world not simply as territory to be adequately represented, but as a diverse and shifting mix of oral, print and electronic cultures, the concept of pluralism embodies attitudes that understand and respect multiple traditions, methods and user needs. The mix

of these information cultures in our libraries is, and will be, varied. The spread of electronic information technologies in our society and its institutions and organizations is, and probably will continue to be, controversial, dialogic, and uneven, raising many issues, including those of equality of access and opportunity that are of traditional and ongoing importance in our profession. Truly pluralistic education in library and information science will, again in my personal view, develop professionals who have the knowledge and analytical ability to understand the complex interactions of multiple information cultures, who can move easily among diverse approaches to information and information use, and who can become leaders as our society struggles to cope with and to create the information landscape of the future.

Within the context of a converging sense that a pluralistic educational response is needed, SLIS-IUPUI is strengthening its program of education for library and information science professionals. A SLIS office opened this fall in the new IUPUI library, giving the program a physical locus where faculty and staff are available on a regular basis. In keeping with IUPUI's tradition of evening classes, the office is open until six o'clock so that students who work full-time can drop in before class. The faculty and staff are encouraging the use of electronic communication to further increase the interaction between students in Indianapolis with Bloomington and students throughout the state with Indianapolis and Bloomington. The number of SLIS faculty based at IUPUI will grow in the next years, and Bloomington faculty will continue to play an active part in the program in Indianapolis.

The new IUPUI library is the cornerstone of the SLIS-IUPUI facilities, serving as home base for SLIS offices and as a laboratory where students can experience and observe a multi-faceted information environment and a variety of professional roles, both within the

library and as a result of the partnership between the library and the IUPUI Office of Integrated Technologies. A number of SLIS classes will be held in the classroom and computer facilities of the library, and students will have the IUPUI library information system as a resource for work inside and outside of class. Plans are underway to evaluate and strengthen the library's print and electronic resources in support of library and information science. SLIS-IUPUI faculty will also have access to the numerous instructional development technologies and services offered from a partnership between the library and the IUPUI Office of Integrated Technologies.

As the SLIS program grows in Indianapolis, it will share the IUPUI focus on responding to the needs of its students. IUPUI students in general, and in the SLIS program in particular, are usually employed adults, attending school part-time, who are either preparing for a first professional career, seeking additional professional qualifications, or planning a mid-career shift. Most are commuters, and many come a great distance. Courses at SLIS-IUPUI have traditionally been scheduled in the evenings and on weekends, and additional modes of course delivery are both a priority at IUPUI and at SLIS. Three directions are being actively explored. SLIS has offered a number of courses in both Bloomington and Indianapolis in compressed time frameworks such as weekend workshops, and more are being planned. A second model of alternative delivery is distance education, using information technologies to deliver courses to remote sites. SLIS has a substantial history of offering classes via IHETS (Indiana Higher Education Telecommunication System) and will continue with this effort as well as experimenting with other delivery models, such as electronic learning communities. SLIS-IUPUI is also exploring interest in the library community for a third alternative—the "once-a-week" program—a cooperative program with employers where

students attend classes one day a week to complete their professional degree.

Along with what we hope will be growing interest in the SLIS-IUPUI program, the number and variety of course offerings is expected to grow. Instructors will be drawn from the SLIS faculty based at IUPUI, the SLIS faculty based at Bloomington and adjunct faculty members. Student input is actively being sought in developing class offerings, and new methods of forecasting students' needs for courses are being explored. The multi-dimensional information environment and the variety of information roles and activities in that environment call for a balanced approach to scheduling, attempting to provide offerings relevant to students with a variety of interests and at the same time assuring that the major courses in any one special interest appear frequently enough to allow meaningful concentrations. The SLIS faculty is currently reviewing the entire SLIS curriculum, looking toward degrees in both library science and information science. At the core of the new curriculum, as I view the process unfolding, is a two-fold commitment: a commitment to the continued centrality of libraries in a pluralistic information environment, and a commitment to the centrality of our discipline's knowledge and skills to organization, access and use of information in educational institutions, businesses and organizations, and in society as a whole.

A full-fledged professional program offers more than a roster of courses. Extra curricular opportunities of many kinds provide students with experiences and information relevant to their future professional practice. Opportunities to participate in the school's governance, to provide input to the school's programs, to hear faculty, library practitioners and other professionals speak to current issues in the profession, to participate in professional organizations, and to begin to develop the professional networks that are

central to a successful career are part of a complete graduate education. Yet most existing models for providing these experiences are geared toward the full-time student who has easy physical access to campus and a flexible schedule. Developing a structure of relevant extra-curricular activities that meets the needs and constraints of IUPUI students is both a high priority and a challenging task. Student needs have been assessed through formal and informal surveys, and a SLIS-IUPUI chapter of the IUPUI Graduate Student Association is being formed which will provide input and direction to future efforts. An electronic communication structure is being discussed that will be both a tool for disseminating information and a forum for discussing issues of shared interest. In the very early discussion stages, also, is an electronic forum for extracurricular activities that would deliver colloquia, informal presentations, short workshops, town-meeting discussions, debates on current issues, and other exchanges central to professional education to sites around the state.

This article has attempted to provide an update for the Indiana library community on the development of the SLIS program at IUPUI from the point of view of a newly arrived faculty member who has some administrative responsibilities for the program. Over the next few years as the program evolves, many voices will be helpful in shaping its directions. Close ties with the Indiana library and information communities can only strengthen SLIS's efforts to provide relevant library and information science education that will equip our graduates to develop fulfilling careers, maintain the centrality of our profession and of our professional knowledge base, and provide leadership in the complex, chaotic, and challenging information world of the future.

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