

## Comprehensive Exam Questions - 2004

### Spring 2004

1. Since September 11, 2001, legislation, such as the USA Patriot Act, has been passed, expanding the power given to law enforcement agencies to monitor the communications of residents of the US in order to detect potential terrorist activity.

Write a case analysis using an information setting of your choice in order to respond to:

- a. Discuss the elements of the Patriot Act that engender the tension between the government protecting the national security versus protecting the civil liberties of individual citizens.
  - b. Discuss how the Patriot Act has heightened the basic tension of professional, ethical and legal issues for information professionals confronted with these decisions.
  - c. Determine what steps you would take to determine appropriate policies and procedures for your information organization.
2. The information profession is undergoing change due to the new digital environment and technological developments. In the library environment, we have face-to-face contact with users who come to the site. Reference services for users typically include, but are not limited to
    - a. Teaching information literacy
    - b. Interviewing for information needs
    - c. Helping with access to resources.What are the challenges when more and more users rely on information through digital systems? What methods can the information professional create and offer to the community of virtual users?
  3. You have been hired by an information provider (library or provider in some environment of your choice) in your favorite subject area. You discover that while it has been accumulating a collection of materials in the subject (periodicals, reports, books, videos, websites), the staff has been too busy and understaffed to provide access to it. The material and printouts have just been placed on shelves in a conference room, primarily in the order they have arrived. The CEO has indicated that she wants an information center of some sort for access to the information, but she is vague on specifics.
    - a. Briefly describe your information provider.
    - b. Identify and describe the steps you will follow to bring order to this chaos. Defend why each step is important.
    - c. Describe the structure of the access methods that you will build. How will the methods improve information retrieval?

4. B. C. (Bertram) Brookes proclaimed that the basis of librarianship is bibliographic. Michael Gorman has insisted that bibliographic control is the heart of the information professions. Michael Buckland has asserted that access to information is the central and defining principle of library and information science.  
In a sense, all three proclamations are true. Demonstrate that you understand the central features of the field. Then, identify three major components, or facets, of the concept “access to information” and describe their significance to the provision of access to information.
5. The increasing use of the terms “information professionals,” “information specialists,” and “information managers” suggests a broadening of the perspective of the library and information science field beyond a traditional, but limiting, single-institution (e.g. library) world-view. To respond effectively to what is likely to continue as a rapidly changing and expanding field, practitioners must understand, adapt to and be ready to apply conceptually-based principles rather than merely narrowly-defined techniques.
  - a. Defend the position stated above.
  - b. Select three (3) of the seven (7) features common to all information disciplines or species. Define, explain and discuss each as an underlying principle that applies to all species of the genus information profession:
    1. The information life cycle
    2. The gate keeping function
    3. Information storage and retrieval
    4. User needs assessment
    5. Client/user assistance and instruction
    6. The custodial preservation function
    7. Ethical standards/professional responsibilities.

### **Summer 2004**

1. You have been asked to develop a Web site for your organization or you have asked to choose a Web-based resource for your agency. You face a continuum of issues. You could develop or choose a Web site that is targeted for a single browser and single operating system. This will enable you to use the latest and greatest features of that computing environment. On the other hand, you could develop or choose a Web site that reaches the most varied number of users (including the handicapped) but would not use the latest and greatest features of a single environment.

What is your plan for making this decision regarding the development or choice of this Web site? What LIS principles guide your decision-making process? What group of users are you going to consciously include? Ignore? What is your end result in this process?

Briefly describe your environment, state whether you are the developer or selector, and answer the questions above.

2. LIS students are exposed to numerous—and sometimes lofty—ideas about the importance of information (e.g., “life is information in motion”; “all problems are information problems”).

There are, however, more basic models for understanding the nature of information. Explain why information must necessarily be regarded as both a physical and a cognitive phenomenon. Provide examples to illustrate your answer.

3. Users increasingly believe that web-based search engines (e.g., Google) are able to solve most information retrieval problems. Further, users are often satisfied with the results of the searches based upon “quick and dirty” search strategies rather than exploring other databases that have been more carefully structured with consideration of access points and usability. Considering how search engines create searchable indexes and the nature of keyword searching, identify and discuss three important issues that impact the effectiveness of web searching. Further, compare the issues you identify regarding web information retrieval to a more traditional information retrieval system.

4. The increasing use of the terms "information professionals," "information specialists," and "information managers" suggests a broadening of the perspective of the library and information science field beyond a traditional, but limiting, single-institution (e.g., library) world-view. To respond effectively to what is likely to continue as a rapidly changing and expanding field, practitioners must understand, adapt, and be ready to apply conceptually founded principles rather than merely narrowly-defined techniques. Principles and concepts stand the test of time far better than techniques, are portable from one workplace to another, and translate more easily from one discipline to another within the larger information profession.

Listed below are six (6) features common to all information disciplines, or species. Select three (3) of them and define, explain, and discuss each as an underlying principle that applies to the entire genus called *information profession*:

- The information life cycle
- The gatekeeping function
- Information storage and retrieval
- User needs assessment
- Client/user assistance and instruction
- The custodial preservation function

5. Two models for the future of the information professional have received some attention in the literature: (1) the "Redundancy Model" where information professionals will no longer be needed to mediate access to information directly from providers, and (2) the "Masters of the Universe Model" where no one will be able to find the best and the most useful information without consulting an information professional.

(a) Which of these two models seems most likely to you? Elaborate.

(b) If neither seems appropriate, propose an alternate model that seems more reasonable and justify your position?

(c) What might be done to assure that the future will be favorable for those in our profession?

## Fall 2004

1. Publicly funded information agencies -- libraries are a good example -- are created as a public good, i.e. that is they support and enhance the quality of life in a community. Increasingly, critics argue that those interested in the services and collections provided should pay for them and that those who are not interested should not pay. Thus, information agencies would be privately funded.

To what degree should community information agencies be publicly funded? In particular, what public good do they or might they create?

2. Research, publication, and sharing are important attributes of a profession. Research should inform and improve practice resulting in best practice.

Select a type of information agency to frame your answers to the following questions. How important is it for information professionals in the field to be familiar with their research literature and be currently aware? How important is it for information professionals to conduct research as part of their day-to-day responsibilities? Provide a rationale for your responses to these questions.

3. Diversity is an issue for all of the professions today. With substantial changes in populations, many assume that professions need to reflect the changing demographic structure of the communities that they serve.

Is it important for the information professions to be more diverse? Why? What might be done to increase diversity?

4. Librarian designed information systems assume that there is a need for structured access points, and that recall and precision must perform at certain levels. Usability and convenience are also important so that these systems often provide different interfaces for expert and casual users. However, many users instead use an internet search engine and accept the results of “googling” as satisfactory without even considering the use of a library database.

To what degree are library databases relevant for the user of a library of your choice (academic, media center, public, special)? Support your statement by comparing the strengths and weaknesses of a search in a structured information system (e.g., ERIC etc.) with a Google search of the Internet. Discuss such issues as resource availability and quality, search vocabulary options, search logic, and ranking of results as well as searcher time and effort.

5. “In 2002 only eight percent of 7-9 year olds had cell phones, a year later this number had doubled to one in six having mobiles. In the age group 10-11 years, 58 percent use mobiles, up 12 percent points in a year. Nearly all older children have cell phones: 89 percent of 12-13 year-olds, 96 percent of 14-15 year-olds, and 100 percent of 16-21 year-

olds own and use mobiles. The survey measured habits at 1,500 households across the country.”

Assuming that these findings are generally applicable, identify and discuss the implications for services in an information agency of your choice.

## Comprehensive Exam Questions - 2005

### Spring 2005

1. “Life is information in motion.” Science has discovered that information is produced and exchanged at all levels, even the cellular. Steven Hawking has recently reversed his previous view and decided that black holes do, in fact, emit information. Those in the information professions must be able to articulate why information is critically important, because if it is not important, they are not important. Identify and discuss reasons why information is important at the
  - a. personal level
  - b. organizational level
  - c. societal level
  - d. national level
  - e. global level
  
2. Information professionals believe that well designed information systems contain structured access points and vocabulary, and that recall and precision must perform at certain levels. Usability and convenience are also important so that these systems often provide different interfaces for expert and novice users. However, many users instead use an Internet search engine and accept the results of “googling” as satisfactory without even considering the use of databases available to them.
  - a. To what degree are databases relevant for the user of a library of your choice (academic, media center, public, special)? Support your statement by comparing the strengths and weaknesses of a search in a structured information system (e.g., ERIC etc.) with a Google search of the Internet.
  - b. Discuss issues such as resource availability and quality, search vocabulary options, search logic, and ranking of results as well as searcher time and effort.
  - c. When, in your view, should a user resort to a search engine instead of a database or vice versa?
  
3. Metadata plays a crucial role in organizing and representing information resources. In your essay, address the following:
  - a. What is metadata? (You should go beyond the simplistic definition: data about data).
  - b. Why is metadata crucial to organizing and representing information objects?
  - c. Currently, many different metadata schemes are being developed in various environments and disciplines. What are the ramifications of these developments?
  - d. What developments in information technologies have made metadata crucial and why?
  
4. The system-centered notion of relevance implies that a document retrieved from an information retrieval system is relevant if there is a match between the user’s request and the aboutness of the document. The user-centered notion of relevance focuses on the

user's need and the degree the document retrieved fulfill this need. In your answer, discuss the following:

- a. Why the notion of system-centered relevance is inadequate?
  - b. How relevance is usually judged from a user's perspective?
  - c. Could a user's relevance judgment change over time for the same retrieved documents and why?
  - d. What factors affect relevance judgment?
  - e. Does a user's relevance judgment of documents retrieved from the Web vary from those retrieved in information retrieval systems such as online databases and why?
5. The current information environment requires that all users become information literate. In your answer:
- a. Define "information literacy."
  - b. Discuss the importance of information literacy in the online age.
  - c. Identify the crucial characteristics of an "information literate" person.

### **Summer 2005**

1. There is some controversy in the profession about the tension between library science and information science as seen in the curriculum of LIS programs. Many librarians feel that there is too much emphasis on information technology and information science and not enough emphasis on the basics of library service. Identify and discuss the similarities and differences between a library school and an information school with some focus on what all information professionals need to know and do and what might be specific to library service.

2. Fundamental thinking on information [includes recreation too] focuses on the particular tasks that people must complete and then links successful completion to provision of the right content for the right person at the right time.

- a. To what degree do typical LIS access systems such as the on-line public access catalog or on-line databases help people to find the content that they need?
- b. How might they be improved?

3. The Internet and the WWW have allowed many special collections to become widely accessible. One of the challenges facing these digital collections is the provision of metadata that will allow searching and finding particular images. Identify and discuss some of the problems that might be encountered in providing intellectual access to digitized images.

4. The pace of change seems to increase relentlessly, especially changes involving information technology. Using your crystal ball, identify and discuss three changes likely to have substantial impact on collections and services in the next five years. An alternative approach would be to respond to this question: How will libraries [or another type of content provider of your choice] be different in 2010?

5. The term "digital libraries" is defined and interpreted in different ways by researchers, practitioners, and users. Discuss the following:

- a. Define "digital library"
- b. Compare a digital library with a traditional library, and
- c. Identify and discuss at least one management challenge, one technical challenge, and one service challenge facing those who develop digital libraries.

### **Fall 2005**

1. Identify an information environment of your choice and write an essay to address the following questions:

- What is the role of a librarian and/or information professional within this environment?
- How can the principles of information organization and representation help you in performing this role?
- What are the challenges facing the professional in performing the role? How will you address these challenges?

2. There are two proposed theoretical perspectives in information science: the physical paradigm and the cognitive paradigm. In your essay

- describe what the two paradigms are
  - discuss how these theoretical positions address information as a phenomenon
  - discuss the role of the paradigms in information research
3. There is a debate in the field as to whether or not traditional libraries will be a viable institution in the future. In your essay
- provide your position on this issue
  - support your arguments with analysis, examples, and/or facts to prove your point
4. Information is defined in so many ways by researchers, professionals, and users. In your essay
- provide your definition(s) of information
  - describe the important elements of a typical information system
  - compare the user-centered approach with the system-centered approach
5. As a representative of a public library, you have just been asked by your library board of directors to install Internet filtering software on all computers. In your essay
- discuss the benefits and disadvantages of such practice
  - address issues of censorship and its potential legal ramifications
  - propose criteria for selecting an appropriate filtering software packet

## Comprehensive Exam Questions - 2006

### Spring 2006

1. Electronic resources are transforming library information services and creating new challenges for the organization and representation of information. Specify ONE information environment (academic, school media center, public, special, archives, etc.) and discuss the following:
  - As a result of the availability of electronic resources, identify THREE new challenges that have been created for organizing and representing information in your selected information environment?
  - How can the principles of information organization and representation help an information professional in addressing these challenges? Provide examples to substantiate your point.
2. There is a historical tension between the issues of censorship and intellectual freedom throughout the information professions, and this tension will likely continue in the future. Many libraries are coming under public scrutiny for allowing Internet access to users without controlling content with such devices as filtering software. Select ONE library environment of your choice (academic, school media center, public, special) and identify the core issues related to this debate and their potential impact on your users in the selected library setting. Develop and justify appropriate policy for your library.
3. Relevance typically refers to the match between the formal representation of a user's request (i.e., a query) and the formal representation of a document. (e.g., a document surrogate). Explain how this definition of relevance does/does not address characteristics of the document and the user that can affect relevance judgments for meeting user's needs. Also, identify the necessary distinction between relevance and pertinence as related to the discussion.
4. Funding agencies are increasingly insisting on evidence that demonstrates the connection between funding and results. Considering the importance of funding, discuss how you would gather and use evidence to demonstrate the need for funding in ONE information environment of your choice (academic, school media center, public, special, archive, etc.). As a manager of the chosen information environment, identify key elements in the planning and management process towards this goal, with special emphasis on how you would address the political and public relations dimensions of your planning?

5. Information retrieval (IR) involves building technologies to make it easier for end users to get access to the information they want. Research in the field builds on earlier work as well as draws on research from many other disciplines. Briefly explain how IR has benefited from this interdisciplinary cross-fertilization. Outline some promising future directions of study that could result from a closer interaction between researchers in IR and a field of your choice. Explain why you believe this would be productive and the kind of research activities that could be undertaken in such efforts to strengthen the interdisciplinary connections.

## **Summer 2006**

1. In a traditional print world, libraries purchased books and other materials. Once purchased, the materials were owned by the library until a decision was made to sell or discard them. In an electronic world, many books, journals and other materials are leased rather than purchased. Lease agreements often contain certain restrictions.

Discuss the major issues surrounding the “ownership” versus “access” debate. What are the advantages and disadvantages of both the purchase/ownership and lease/access models? Discuss the short-term and long-term implications for an information agency of your choice.

2. Digital libraries and collections are receiving increasing attention in the literature and at professional meetings. Some argue that traditional hard copy collections will soon be a thing of the past. In the current environment, access systems simultaneously hold metadata for hard-copy and digital items, thus transforming library-based and other information services and creating challenges for the organization and representation of information.

First, summarize, compare and contrast the roles of descriptive, administrative, and structural metadata. Then, considering a collection that combines both physical objects (e.g., books, DVDs, slides) and purely digital assets (e.g., datasets, blog content) provide the rationale for differences in the design of one descriptive element, one administrative metadata element, and one structural metadata element for each type of item (i.e., physical object and digital assets) in the collection.

3. B. C. (Bertram) Brookes proclaimed the basis of librarianship to be bibliographic. Michael Gorman has insisted that bibliographic control is the heart of the information professions. Michael Buckland has asserted that access to information is the central and defining principle of library and information science.

In a sense, the core knowledge of the information fields can be understood as focusing on access to information. First, demonstrate that you understand this central feature of the field [can we pose this as a more specific question along the lines of “Explain the concept bibliographic control and its role in providing information access.”] Then, identify three major components, or facets, of the concept "access to information" and describe their significance to the provision of access to information. [Can this, too, be posed more specifically? I'd also like to elicit at least one “facet” that has emerged from and is unique to digital systems, such as use of natural language (full text indexing); social classification (tagging) systems; Internet search engines].

4. The development of the Internet and the rapid development of new applications (from search engines (e.g., Lycos, Altavista, Google) and directories (e.g., Yahoo!) to e-commerce sites (e.g., Amazon, eBay) to digital libraries (e.g., American Memory, JStor) to collaborative, social information spaces (e.g., MySpace, Wikipedia, Flickr) makes it possible to envision a world without information professionals and libraries. This has been labeled the “Redundancy Model” because information professionals will no longer be needed to mediate access to information. Others propose the “Masters of the Universe Model,” where no one will be able to find high quality information without consulting an information professional.

Taking a specific information environment as your starting point (e.g., academic library, school media center, public library, special library, etc.), discuss how information professionals remain relevant in an environment where users can obtain all of the information they need from their desks or their homes.

5. You have been asked to develop a multi-lingual, accessible Web-based information system for your information agency. You will be making the decisions about technology selection, information architecture, usability / accessibility, metadata design, and content management. Select an information environment of your choice and discuss the following questions:
  - A. How will you determine the technical and cognitive capabilities of your audience(s)?
  - B. How will you approach issues of providing access to materials in multiple languages, multiple formats (e.g., large print; audio); and non-Roman alphabets?
  - C. Which LIS theories and principles will guide your decision-making process?
  - D. What role will information and communications standards and recommendations play in your development approach?

## Fall 2006

1. One of the interesting developments in library services has been the notion of the “information commons” where the traditional reference desk and the computer services help desk have been brought together in one integrated service point. This trend also builds on the fact that many libraries are now responsible for a large number of public-use computers. What are the assets and the liabilities of moving from the “library” to the “information commons” model?
2. As library collections move from hard-copy-owned content to digital-leased content, librarians are faced with a variety of management issues, including dealing with licensing issues, developing infrastructure, and providing different kinds of customer services. One consequence has been a decline in the number of users who use content within the library itself. Is this a bad thing? Will the increase in out-of-building users change the nature of the library itself?
3. A variety of commentators have noted that Google’s search engine interface is far superior to what is found in a typical on-line catalog or database and often yields better results. Using one or two examples of your choice, discuss the assets and liabilities of the “Google way” contrasted to the way that librarians have traditionally provided intellectual access to content.
4. Information professionals increasingly are required to collect and present evidence that demonstrates a connection between needs, funding, and outcomes. Provide examples of the kind of evidence you would use to support your argument that your agency makes a positive contribution to its community. Select ONE information environment of your choice (e.g., academic, school, public/special library, archive, etc.) as a setting for your response.
5. Many disciplines have codes of ethics, but there is as of yet no one overarching ethical code that includes every type of information professional. Discuss the major principles that might be included in such a code

## Comprehensive Exam Questions - 2007

*Note: In Spring 2007, two sets of questions were administered. Both sets have been included below.*

### Spring 2007

#### Set A

1. Some reference librarians have observed that there is a substantial decline in the number of “right-answer” factual questions brought by patrons because they are easily answered on the Web. At the same time, librarians report an increased number of genuinely challenging “stumper” type questions. If this trend continues, what impact might it have on (1) how librarians are educated and (2) how information agencies are organized?
2. Many years ago, Lawrence Clark Powell stated that librarianship involved love of books, love of people, and a need to bring the two together. Does this seem true today? Why? What elements of that statement, if any, would you change to reflect the realities of professional practice in the early 21st century? In your response, please address all three elements of Powell’s original statement.
3. In a traditional print world, libraries purchased books and other materials. Once purchased, the materials were owned by the library until a decision was made to sell or discard them. In an electronic world, many books, journals and other materials are leased rather than purchased. Librarians are thus faced with a variety of management issues, including dealing with licensing issues, developing infrastructure, and providing different kinds of customer services.

Discuss the major issues surrounding the “ownership” versus “access” debate. What are the advantages and disadvantages of both the purchase/ownership and lease/access models? Discuss the short-term and long-term implications for an information agency of your choice.

4. Michael Buckland has asserted that providing access to information is the central and defining principle of library and information science. Demonstrate that you understand this central feature of the field by identifying three major components, or facets, of the concept "access to information" and describe their significance to the provision of access to information.
5. Digital libraries and collections are receiving increasing attention in the literature and at professional meetings. Some argue that traditional hard copy collections will soon

be a thing of the past. However, in the current environment, access systems simultaneously hold metadata for hard-copy and digital items, thus creating challenges for the organization and representation of information.

First, summarize, compare and contrast the roles of descriptive, administrative, and structural metadata. Then, considering a collection that combines both physical objects (e.g., books, DVDs, slides) and purely digital assets (e.g., datasets, blog content, digitized journal articles and books, video files), provide the rationale for differences in the design of one descriptive metadata element, one administrative metadata element, and one structural metadata element for each type of item (i.e., physical object and digital asset) in the collection.

### **Spring 2007 Set B**

1. Ranganathan's Third Law states “every book its reader.” What does this mean? Choose one kind of information agency and describe how this law might (1) affect the values that guide the information agency and (2) be applied to the design of policy, services, and organizational structure in that information agency?
2. All professionals hold a “world view” of their work and the standards associated with their practice, which is shaped by a variety of experiences. When you entered the Information Sciences program at UT, you were likely not aware of the important theories and theorists that guide contemporary research and practice in our field. Which particular theories and theorists shape your work with users and the use of information? Which specific theories guide your understanding of the structure and organization of intellectual content, regardless of format, including creation, exchange, and storage of content?
3. In a traditional print world, libraries purchased books and other materials. Once purchased, the materials were owned by the library until a decision was made to sell or discard them. In an electronic world, many books, journals and other materials are leased rather than purchased. Librarians are thus faced with a variety of management issues, including dealing with licensing issues, developing infrastructure, and providing different kinds of customer services.

Discuss the major issues surrounding the “ownership” versus “access” debate. What are the advantages and disadvantages of both the purchase/ownership and lease/access models? Discuss the short-term and long-term implications for an information agency of your choice

4. The development of the Internet and the rapid development of new applications from

search engines (e.g., Lycos, Altavista, Google) and directories (e.g., Yahoo!) to e-commerce sites (e.g., Amazon, eBay) to digital libraries (e.g., American Memory, JStor) to collaborative, social information spaces (e.g., Web 2.0 / Library 2.0, MySpace, Wikipedia, Flickr) makes it possible to envision a world without information professionals and libraries. These developments have led to speculation that information professionals will no longer be needed to mediate access to information. Others argue that the information landscape is becoming more complex, making it increasingly difficult to find high quality information without consulting an information professional.

Taking a specific information environment as your starting point (e.g., academic library, school media center, public library, special library, etc.), and making explicit use of what you know about the roles played and the value added by information intermediaries, discuss how information professionals remain relevant in an environment where users can obtain the information they need from their desks or their homes.

5. You have been asked to develop a multi-lingual, accessible Web-based information system for your information agency. You will be making the decisions about technology selection, information architecture, usability / accessibility, metadata design, and content management. Select an information environment of your choice and discuss the following questions:
  - 1) How will you determine the technical and cognitive capabilities of your audience(s)?
  - 2) Which LIS theories and principles will guide your decision-making process?

## **Summer 2007**

1. We live in a country that consists of many people of different backgrounds, cultures, values, and preferences. From the core values statement of the American Library Association, we read:

“ALA recognizes its broad social responsibilities. The broad social responsibilities of the American Library Association are defined in terms of the contribution that librarianship can make in ameliorating or solving the critical problems of society; support for efforts to help inform and educate the people of the United States on these problems and to encourage them to examine the many views on and the facts regarding each problem; and the willingness of ALA to take a position on current

critical issues with the relationship to libraries and library service set forth in the position statement.”

In addition, we read, “We value our nation's diversity and strive to reflect that diversity by providing a full spectrum of resources and services to the communities we serve.”

From the ALA code of ethics we read, “We provide the highest level of service to all library users through appropriate and usefully organized resources; equitable service policies; equitable access; and accurate, unbiased, and courteous responses to all requests.

Why is valuing diversity important to the information professional?

How can an information professional promote behaviors that comply with the above values and ethics?

2. A variety of commentators have noted that Google’s search engine interface is far superior to what is found in a typical on-line catalog or database and often yields better results. Using one or two examples of your choice, discuss the assets and liabilities of the “Google way” contrasted with the way that librarians have both traditionally provided and currently guide intellectual access to content.
3. Many disciplines of the information professions have codes of ethics, but there is as of yet no one overarching ethical code that includes a variety of information professionals. Discuss the major principles that might be included in such a code.
4. The OCLC surveys continue to report that many Americans, as well as others, automatically associate "library" with "books and book reading.” These findings support the notion of the library as the "book place." Discuss the assets and the liabilities of the popular notion that libraries are a place to go for books and book reading.
5. As a professional, with a degree from an ALA accredited institution, you have acquired and assimilated many different perspectives of seeing and understanding professional practice.

Selecting an area of information work, discuss the views or perspectives that will inform your work, support your decision-making and guide your professional judgment.

## Fall 2007

1. Developments in the 21st century require information professionals to respond to various changes and challenges. Selecting an information environment,
  - Identify at least one technical or socio-cultural change for information professionals in their domains of work
  - Discuss some of the significant challenges faced by information professionals owing to the above identified change(s)?
  - Describe the new skills and competencies required to effectively meet the challenges
  
2. Facilitating intellectual and physical access to resources is important to information professionals. Nevertheless, sometimes information organizations establish physical, cultural or technical rules, procedures or standards that may become barriers that prevent or constrain information access by the communities they serve. Selecting a specific context or environment,
  - Discuss three concrete examples of these barriers
  - Explain why they are barriers in your selected environment
  - Propose solutions to at least one of the identified barriers
  
3. Relevance has been a topic of research interest in information science for more than three decades. What is relevance? Why is relevance a central concept in information science? What are the conflicting views of relevance and their implications for information retrieval?
  
4. Researchers and scholars of information seeking and use (for example, Carol Kuhlthau) have described the importance of “affect” (feelings, emotions or moods) with respect to the user’s experience in the process of information seeking. The classic triad of thoughts, actions, and feelings central to any constructive process is rarely taken into consideration in information-seeking processes. A holistic view of information seeking encompasses the affective experiences of users. Selecting a specific context,
  - Describe the impact of affect (users’ feelings) in the information-seeking process
  - Discuss how information professionals can reduce the impact of negative emotions in information seeking

5. There are many environments in which information is organized to facilitate access. To effectively organize information, we need principles, methods, and tools. Selecting an information environment,

- Discuss why representation of information is important in this environment
- Describe how information is represented in this environment
- Give concrete examples of such representations and their specific purposes

## Comprehensive Exam Questions - 2008

### Spring 2008

3. Using controlled vocabulary terms from authority lists in thesauri or subject heading lists can have powerful effects on search success. What features of controlled vocabularies affect search success? Identify and describe three of these significant features and discuss how each feature affects search success positively and/or negatively.
  
4. Information professionals are faced with many challenges in light of the fast developments in information technologies. Emerging technologies are reshaping information access and delivery. Many users expect information systems and services provided by commercial sites (e.g., Google, Amazon.com) to be available in libraries or information agencies. Information professionals are concerned about losing their roles and/or presence in the digital information environment.
  - a. Discuss your role as a future information professional in this changing environment, and
  - b. Discuss methods or strategies you would consider to make your library/agency competitive in relation to providing cutting edge technologies and services that satisfy user needs.
  
5. Information literacy is perceived by many information professionals as a critical ability for individuals to possess in order to flourish in the Information Age. Identify a specific information environment or library type and
  - define what information literacy is within the context of the chosen environment,
  - identify and discuss three characteristics of an ‘information literate’ person within that environment, and
  - discuss how advances in information technology within that environment have influenced the importance of information literacy.
  
6. What is copyright? Identify and describe three key features of copyright law in a digital environment. Describe and discuss the implications of copyright law with respect to access and use of digital content.
  
7. S.R. Ranganathan proposed several essential truths about library and information science in his Five Laws of Library Science (1931):
  - “1. Books are for use.

2. For every reader, his [or her] book.
3. For every book, its reader.
4. Save the time of the reader.
5. A library is a growing organism.”

Ranganathan created these laws over 75 years ago. Since that time there have been many changes to our profession and our practices resulting from developments in information technology, standards and communications. Select any two of Ranganathan's five laws, and for each (1) discuss what the law meant during Ranganathan's time in a 'traditional' library environment, and (2) discuss what the same law means today.