Nalini - INTRODUCTION (10 min in total)

Nalini: Hello everyone – many thanks to the conference organizers for inviting us to speak today about how we engage with theory, practice, and praxis in the work of the Inforum, and Information Services. My name is Nalini, and I coordinate Reference and Research Services. [turn and look at KS/ES]
Elisa: introduces self

Kathleen: introduces self

THEORY, PRACTICE & PRAXIS IN THE INFORUM

A quick word about terminology:
We’ll be using the terms iSchool and Faculty of Information synonymously. Also, as of 2008, the Inforum refers the physical space on the 4th and 5th floor of the Bissell Building. It is part of the larger Information Services (or IS) unit at the faculty, which also includes Information Technology, and Web services.

Referring back to the very clear definitions of theory, practice, and praxis framing the theme of this conference, we can conceive of our work in the following way.

What we do, our actions in the form of the services that we provide, are informed by the goals of the iSchool curriculum. That is, in fact, our mandate: to support the teaching, learning, and research goals of the Faculty of Information and its main user communities of students and faculty.

In terms of what we think about what we do: We see ourselves as a place that both offers services, as well as acting as a model of service provision, with opportunities for students and faculty to participate in developing and delivering those services.

We believe that our professional operations are based in praxis, where we as practitioners, reflect and act in a dynamic interplay between our work, the theories underlying information work, and information theory as embodied in curriculum.

We hope to give you examples of the ways in which we manifest this, and also make space to hear your comments and suggestions at the end of the presentation, which we have structured as follows:

- First we’ll give a bit of historical context about our origins, then summarize who we are today.
- Then we’ll talk about ways in which our work is integrated into the teaching mission of the faculty, and also about our role in creating community.
- Next we’ll highlight some of the ways that we offer practice opportunities to iSchool students
- After that, we will focus on how our praxis-based model manifests, for example how we have responded to trends in information services
- Then, after briefly touching on some challenges and future plans, we look forward to your comments and questions.

WHERE WE CAME FROM (5min)

- From the founding of the Toronto Library School in 1928 to the iSchool of today, there has always been some form of library here.
While we exist as a physical space within the Bissell Building, we are also an intellectual concept, embodying the ethos and strategic vision of the iSchool – a place where people come to study information practices in information organizations.

Our very formation in 1997, is an example of theory/practice/and praxis. Built on the foundation of the Faculty of Information Science (or FIS) Library, the Inforum was the result of a broadly-constituted task force during the deanship of Prof. Lynne Howarth. The task force consulted extensively with students, faculty, and external professional communities who together envisioned and implemented a vibrant information facility, combining the notion of modern academic library, with ready access to information technology, in service to the education of information professionals, in the early days of the digital age.

We turned out to be one of the pioneers in the Information Commons model. In the years that followed, other libraries, including other U of T libraries, looked to us as an exemplar for implementing similar changes in their libraries.

In 2008, we evolved further: The Inforum was formally combined with IT and web services into the IS unit. The document that laid out this structural change, written by then Dean, Brian Cantwell Smith, was unequivocal in its intent:

“iSchool faculty members, researchers, students, and staff...use Information Services in order to do work. Personnel and services in the IS division focus on services to enable those functions. The model is one of reflective practice, and integration (BCS, 2008)
WHO WE ARE TODAY (5 min)

Here are some key elements of who we are today.

We are a staff
made up of a team of librarians, library technicians, IT professionals, and student assistants

Our areas of work include
Include collections, information technology, instruction, outreach, public services, reference & research services.

We see ourselves as fulfilling three core functions:

- **We are a specialized academic library, and part of the UTL system:** offering services, resources, and facilities customized specifically to the needs of iSchool students and faculty.

The next two functions are where we locate the key differences between ourselves and other academic libraries:

- **We are a site of connections:** acting as a social and intellectual hub within the Faculty. Part of our work involves creating community within the iSchool, as well as developing connections for ourselves and our users with wider professional and academic communities.

- **We are a key part of the iSchool curricular process:** acting as a locale for information practices that can be drawn upon for course and program-related purposes, that can provide opportunities for students to experience theory in practice, and operating as a testing ground where faculty initiatives can be implemented.
THEORY, PRACTICE & PRAXIS IN THE INFORUM – 25 min

For most of the rest of today’s presentation, we will be looking at how Information Services engages in theory, practice and praxis.

Elisa - THEORY / INVOLVEMENT IN CURRICULUM

Our engagement in theory is evident in the ways that we are involved in the iSchool curriculum. Our Information Services staff has been integrated into the teaching mission of our iSchool for a long time, and in many different ways:
• As members of the academic staff, our librarians sit on Faculty Council committees as well as working groups concerned with curricular matters. These include, and go beyond simply, Library & Information Science (or LIS) matters:
  o We have ongoing representation on the Programs Committee, whose mandate is to review and make recommendations on academic degree programs at the iSchool
  o In the past:
    ▪ We have had a representative on the LIS curriculum working group
    ▪ We have participated in the Education working group (2004) which resulted in the revision of curricular structures and practices at the Faculty

• Our staff members, across all areas of responsibility, have had close contact with individual faculty members, to work on course and program-related initiatives:
  o Display[Case] was an initiative that saw Ivan Sestak, our Senior IT Administrator, at the time, work with Museum Studies faculty and students to build an online exhibition module, where student work could be showcased online.
  o We have offered:
    ▪ Social media and outreach expertise
    ▪ Been invited into INF 1003, Foundations of Library and Information Science, and volunteered on students’ “Dare” projects
  o Our librarians have also participated in course planning activities.
    ▪ For instance, Elisa participated in a revamp of the course INF1320 Introduction to Bibliographic Control…
    ▪ ...while Kathleen participated in the development of the core information workshop course INF 1005/1006.
  o Our librarians have even partnered directly with an LIS professor in the creation of an innovative course assignment, where students created videos on the reference interview process. We were involved in the assignment design, and the provision of technical support and training in the creation of videos.

• Information Services staff have participated in teaching at the iSchool, from full courses, to guest lectures, to acting as teaching assistants
  o Full courses: e.g. Info Literacy, Intro to Bib Control, Creation and Org of Biblio Records
  o Guest lectures within classes:
    ▪ Ethical considerations in the provision of reference services (Nalini, for INF1310)
    ▪ Semantic Web (Ivan, for MSL2325H Museums and New Media Practices)

• The birth and development of the Inforum Instructional Series of lectures and workshops also complement the iSchool's curricular offerings. We will talk about the workshops in more detail later on in the presentation.

SOME BENEFITS OF THESE TYPES OF INTEGRATION
There are many benefits to these types of integration:
Curricular discussions are enriched by practitioner perspectives: practitioners bring on-the-ground experience from the workplace, and from the field. We can act as a source for picking up new information trends, which we communicate back to the Faculty, or explore ourselves.

In guest lectures, we can show students how intellectual processes and theory are woven right through the tasks and practices, and how they can inform policy creation.

Example from Elisa:

- When I teach workshops/give guest lectures on specific tools used by cataloguers or acquisitions staff, I try to give a “big picture” view of how these utilities fit into the workflow of an entire department, as well as bring into sharper focus the relationship between different departments in making resource access possible. In other words, the focus is not entirely on the “tool”/“utilities”. In this way, I provide an overview of the management piece that may not always be evident through course work.

- When discussing cataloguing with students, I know that they will have already learned about the theory that underlie various standards—but to be able to walk the students through the process of doing cataloguing, and talking out loud as I go through my decision-making process, students see how a cataloguer interprets and applies standards.

- On the other hand, I also try to show that cataloguing is not simply about doing; there is an intellectual process taking place, as subject cataloguing and classification often run into such questions as: “Will this provide good subject access to the work?” or “How authentic is this subject heading to the intention of the author?”

The act of subject cataloguing can also involve asking tough ethical questions. For instance, when particular authorized subject headings acknowledges only a dominant worldview, what can a cataloguer do? What about topics that are not describable in a subject headings list except with ambiguous terms or culturally insensitive ones?

Example from Nalini: - A recent example of praxis in action, involved a guest lecture request from a professor teaching one of the required LIS courses. She wanted to give her students a sense of ethical issues arising in reference work from a practitioner’s perspective. I canvassed all the reference librarians at UofT through our mailing list, and at our monthly meeting. Our collective experience provided many actual scenarios from both academic and public library work. I incorporated these real-life examples with the work of reference theorists and library association standards to form the basis of my talk. I used the examples as the exercise component where students could wrestle with different kinds of ethical dilemmas and figuring out how they would deal. It was very gratifying to see how engaged students were with the exercise. After the class was over, I then shared my class script with the U of T reference librarians, some of whom elected to use the material as part of the reference training process in their libraries. This was, to me, a really satisfying example of positive feedback loop between action, reflection, and informed practice.

Kathleen - INSTRUCTIONAL WORKSHOPS [KS]
We also integrate theory into the curriculum of our 3 IS workshop series. We do this, for example, by applying Blooms and Andersons taxonomies to our learning outcomes and cater our content to accommodate varying learning styles. Additionally, we refine our instructional methods based upon class sizes. However, the overarching goal of the IS curriculum to emulate the by-laws and procedures set out by OCGS which state “Graduate education must operate in an atmosphere of academic freedom and open inquiry for faculty and for students. Individuals must be free to pursue knowledge, explore alternative theories and interpretations, and communicate research results without fear of reprisal.” OCGS website. Therefore, throughout the year, Information Services offers workshops and in-class instruction for iSchool students. Our instructional endeavors explore the role of dynamic information landscapes in professional and academic contexts.

Our incoming students are introduced to academic life at the faculty through our Orientation workshop Series. The orientation Series vision is to adequately prepare incoming iSchool students for graduate academic success. These workshops on research, writing, and computing skills address competencies that all iSchool students must possess and help new students to navigate the physical and digital linkages available to them as iSchool students.

The Fall and Winter Instructional workshop Series build upon the groundwork laid by the Orientation Series, the iSchool curriculum, and professional and academic events. The series aims to provide a venue for the practical application of course content and theoretical concept of iSchool programs. These connect students to essential resources by providing a venue where students can acquire and enhance their information literacy and technical skills.
We endeavour to meet our community’s instructional needs by offering relevant workshops. To this end, all our workshop series are coordinated in consultation with: course syllabi, the IS annual student survey results, a yearly environmental scan of other iSchool workshop offerings, current and graduating students, iSchool faculty, and other UTL librarians.

We develop and add new workshops to the roster every year. In order to do so, we must build partnerships within and beyond the iSchool. This year we partnered with the Student Tech Fund and Semaphore in the fall; resulting in 5 new workshops being added to our roster. Additionally, this semester I have worked with IS & D professors, Tech Fund, the AIS Student Chapter, and IBM, in order to offer students an afternoon-long opportunity to network with IBM developers, learn new technical skills, and strengthen existing peer relationships. We are hoping to sustain these valuable partnerships for years to come.

On the subject of technical workshops I am going to give a bit of recent history

In 2008 I expanded the workshop to include more technical workshops. The purpose of workshops of this nature is to provide our students with an introduction to established and emergent technologies used by information and cultural heritage professionals.

In an effort to promote interdepartmental faculty collaboration, I have proposed a partnership between iSchool Institute (ISI), our continuing ed department, and IS. This would be an opportunity for students to have a taste of practical and theoretical applications offered through the IS workshop series, while also acquainting them with the Faculty’s continuing education department. In short, IS workshops would be marketed as the information literacy development and the advancement of technological skills “appetizers”, and the ISI courses would be served as the “entrees”. This proposal is a means to connect current students to the department in their soon-to-be alma mater where they can continue their journey of life-long learning.

Although, as touched on a bit earlier, we strive to embed workshops into courses every year, as Embedded instruction ensures that material relevant to the course, is disseminated to the students as part of the curriculum. This topic is currently being addressed by the Information Services Task Force and the Faculty through a subcommittee, where I am acting as an advising member.

Integration of theory and practice into the whole of the education experience stretches beyond IS and the University recognizes this through it’s co-curricular initiative, called the co-curricular record.

This is a U of T undertaking, to be launched in the fall. It will record students’ co-curricular participation in University-wide events, and produce a transcript of the non-required workshops and courses taken by the student. Currently, the Director of Student Services, the iSchool’s representative on the implementation team, has involved the Careers Officer and myself in the initiative. I have proposed we that we include student-developed and student-run activities, such as the Peer Led Workshop Series, coordination of Employers Showcase, etc. as part of the record. More information will be forthcoming as work continues.
I would like to switch gears and speak a bit on how theory has been used to create iSchool community

THEORY / INVOLVEMENT IN_CREATING ISCHOOL COMMUNITY

Research in education indicates that learning spaces should be designed to support multiple types of learning activities and enable connections and collaboration within and beyond the classroom. Oblinger 2005

The Inforum serves as the information hub and gathering place for the iSchool community. The vision of the Inforum is shaped by literature and Information Services mission to respond to users' experiential, research, and learning needs by providing a space that facilitates collaborative face-to-face interactions, individual study, and digitally-mediated interaction within an academic environment.
Some concrete illustrations of this include:

- The Free form area of the Inforum which is outfitted with 35 modular tables and chairs to promote user interaction and collaborative work. This
- Design of electronic classroom 225/224 which was launched in 2011 to as another locale for the integration of technology with course content
- iTube was the initiative that archived and casted classes of course that opted in as it was iSchool’s lecture capture and streaming platform. The service is currently on hold as the university’s central IT department continues to investigate a new university-wide system, one which the iSchool will adopt, in order to reduce administrative redundancies.

On an ongoing basis we foster community through our participation on

- The life and times committee, chaired by an Information Services Librarian for 4 years, is mandated to “enliven the halls” of the Faculty – both metaphorically and physically.
The committee is tasked with creating and coordinating academic, professional, and social events for the school community. The weekly setting for these events are the iTeas

- We also provide space and staff support in organizing and hosting networking events, visiting scholars such as David Snowden, the Alumni Stars reception; student-run (e.g. Employers Showcase, Connecting @ iSchool), and faculty-initiated Curating Science poster exhibitions and MMSt Internship poster display and the convocation reception.
- Engagement in social/civic issues is of tremendous importance to us. We do this through annual outreach activities such as food bank & clothing drives to support the U of T Food and Clothing Bank, displays of community organizations (Community Living Toronto on 4th Floor), as well as, rallies as advocates on issues related to freedom of academic inquiry and a variety of other information and heritage related topics.

The Faculty is where we breathe life into our teaching, research, and learning passions, as well as each other, and society. Building and strengthening the professional and academic ties inside and beyond the walls of the Bissell Building has been and continues to be on the top of Information Services and the Inforum’s agenda.

Nalini WAYS IN WHICH THEORY/PRACTICE DYNAMIC PLAYS OUT

I am going to take some time now to briefly describe some ways in which the theory/practice dynamic has played out in some of the work that we’ve done.

We have operated as TESTING GROUND FOR THEORY
- Association of College & Research Libraries, or ACRL, developed a set of standards back around 2000, known as the Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education, which is now understood to be a key outcome for college students. The work of a 2001/2002 faculty sub-committee on instruction was informed by these principles, which were then leveraged into the way research skills were delivered to students, through 2 series of Inforum workshops: offered during orientation week and at beginning of each term. The Cite it Right workshop was also an outcome. Our instructional services are now a standard offering.

We’ve worked to BRING ABOUT NEEDED COURSES
- In the mid-2000s, it became increasingly apparent that a course on teaching information professionals how to teach was lacking in our curricular offerings. Inforum librarians were instrumental in changing this. FIS Information Literacy Advisory Group (2006) made up of internal and external people, headed up by the Inforum Director, was formed to look at this, and related issues. An outcome was a course on Info Literacy – taught by the Inforum Director for some years. The course is now a standard offering.

We find that RESEARCH opportunities both ARISE FROM OUR WORK, and conversely CHANGE OUR WORK PRACTICES.
An instance of “research arising from our work” would be a project I worked on in 2009 and 2010.

- It was a research project about cataloguing backlogs that occurred in parallel with my growing awareness of our Inforum backlog; it resulted in change of practices to improve user access to uncatalogued material.
- Cataloguing backlogs are perhaps more universal than most libraries like to admit. I participated with Prof. Lynne Howarth and Les Moor in a retrospective literature review to find out how libraries have historically dealt with the issue of backlogs.

At the same time, my interest in the project was informed by the presence of our own backlog in the Inforum. Participating in this project reassured me that as a manager, cataloguing backlogs were not the real problem that I should be worried about—the real problem to tackle is how to provide user access to resources. To mitigate the presence of backlogs, and provide better access to not-yet-catalogued resources, I worked with our Web Developer, Alex Dvornyak to create online request forms on our website, so that IS staff could more easily promote the forms, and so users can submit requests no matter where they are, and what time of day it is.

**Kathleen** I have had the gratifying pleasure of seeing a research project of mine effect the guidelines and policies in academic libraries. Specifically in the Inforum and UTL and perhaps, though unbeknownst me, more broadly—dreams do come true. Rhonda McEwen, Assistant Professor at CCIT in MISSISSAUGA and I, as She and I are quiet interested digitally-mediated collaboration engaged in a project a couple of years ago that looked at How mobile phones challenge our understandings of collaboration in academic libraries. This project resulted from a
curiosity of how domestication of mobile phones intersected with the application of the information commons model which is a changing articulation of academic libraries as collaborative and technology rich spaces. Data was collected through document analysis and 46 ethnographic observations and interviews. We examined how historical precedents, communication incongruence, and a lack of user studies can result in inconsistencies between academic libraries' visions and users' information practices. We recommended that policy-makers and managers of libraries revise mobile phone guideline reflect a more in-depth understanding of mediated collaboration through mobile phone use, as 80% of mobile phone users in academic libraries are utilizing their device for research purposes.

The academic library of the future cannot be conceived without accounting and preparing for technologies that enable people to collaborate across different geographical spaces. How each library chooses to address user needs will depend on the culture, vision, and resource constraints unique to their context.

Resulting from this research was a revised

- Inforum, Faculty of Information, University of Toronto (2009-2010). Inforum etiquette.

OTHER examples of CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE PROFESSIONAL & SCHOLARLY LITERATURE

Staff have contributed to the scholarly and professional literature in other areas, with one of the outcomes being that finding and recommendations then make their way back into practice. Some examples:

- Involvement in the AACR cataloguing standard
- Research in the cataloguing of electronic resources (mid 1990s) resulted in what was then called the FIS Library, being one of the first libraries on campus to create hot links between the public catalogue record and the full-text document on the web.
- Involvement in a 4 year longitudinal study (in the mid 2000s) that examined student perceptions of their information studies education resulted in findings being fed back to Faculty administration.
- Research in use of social media in 2012, resulted in the application of best practices to IS and the Faculty’s social media accounts.
- Our senior library technician was a part of a federal government sponsored working group of archivists, librarians, library technicians and records manager that conducted a comprehensive cross-sectoral competency analysis, resulting in an competency profile document.

INFORUM AS A TOPIC OF STUDY

Faculty and students have studied aspects of Information Services and the Inforum as part of their own research, interviewing staff, observing various areas of our work, and/or coming up with ways to improve a particular service.

- For example, we were studied as a model of a service system by Prof. Kelly Lyons and an ISD student: their paper was published in Human Factors and Ergonomics in Manufacturing and Service Industries (2012).
- Kelly also supervised a independent study course, where an ISD student worked on the automation of our current contents alerting service to faculty.
Kathleen OFFERING ‘PRACTICE’ OPPORTUNITIES TO STUDENTS

Active and experiential learning components are essential to any professional program. Information Services has a long history of employing, teaching, and mentoring current students.

Our approach is multi-pronged. Some ways in which we offer practical experiences include:

paid opportunities include

Information Services Student Assistants

Through p/t employment with IS, Information Services student Assistants engage in projects related to collection development, reference and research services, communication, displays and exhibitions, IT, outreach, instruction, and public services. These experiential learning opportunities provide students with many ways in which they can contribute to their community, university, and library. on
Summer Internships
The summer internships that we offer differ from the student assistant positions, in that they are more immersive in nature, and are exclusively available to students entering the last year of their Master's degree. Interns work on projects initiated by full-time staff, and are required to develop, manage, and implement self-identified and approved IS related endeavors. Each Intern is required to write a reflective paper, shared publicly on our website, on his/her experience as an Intern, along with their ideas for the future of IS and the internship.

Instructors for workshops
I offer students in the masters and doctoral programs opportunities for teaching within our workshop series. For those with little or no teaching experience, I offer mentorship on the process of creating learning objectives, applying pedagogies, developing content, producing supplemental materials, and applying evaluation methods.

Work-Study:
Recently have hosted a number of work-study positions in various areas of work. Our most recent student hosted during the 2012-2013 academic year, carried out several projects. She researched and wrote a report on the best practices for handling a collection of culturally and historically significant books donated to us by the family of Claude Bissell. Practices surrounding rare books are relatively new for us, andw
we plan to adopt many of the recommendations laid out in her report.

Hosted student assistantships
This is a scholarship program where the student receives funds in exchange for 100 hours of work in a variety of Faculty departments during the academic year): e.g. Past assistantships hosted Information Services have included: compiling and revising faculty members’ web directory entries; and developing a knowledge repository of our operational records.

Resume building practices = unpaid
Volunteer opportunities
We have engaged in mentoring through volunteer positions, particularly through 2 recent conferences hosted by the Faculty, iConference2012 and iPres2012. I recruited and trained volunteers to assist with behind-the-scenes and front end work involved in the logistics of running an international conference. When they were not busy attending to speakers needs, receptions, registration, social media, and AV, they could take advantage of full conference access, allowing them to learn about the latest research contributions from academia and industry, and had ample opportunities to connect with scholars and practitioners from a myriad of disciplines.

Unpaid cataloguing lab (pilot project):
In Summer 2011, our collections librarian ran a pilot project to explore the feasibility of running an unpaid cataloguing lab through Information Services. The selected Ml student worked 60 hours over a 10-week period. The first few weeks consisted of teaching the student how to perform descriptive cataloguing and subject analysis. Then, he catalogued and classified material from our backlog, and took part in regular meetings where they discussed problems with specific items as well as broader cataloguing issues and trends. By the end of the project, he was able to describe and classify 24 items on his own, including books, exhibition catalogues, conference proceedings, a report, and a CD-ROM.

In all of the above venues, we strive to provide a variety of experiences for iSchool students who have professional aspirations outside of LIS, and at the same time, help us by introducing new knowledge and expertise to support our ongoing operations. Examples include:

- **Information Systems & Design:** Internship on investigating and establishing implementation support for the open-source learning management system, Sakai;
- **Archives & Records Management:** Developing and implementing a records management plan for the Information Services; building an online course
documentation repository for the Faculty, and creating a Information Services digital knowledge repository

- **Museum Studies:** Student assistants who are in the MMSt program engage in curatorial practice by creating a series of displays and exhibitions throughout the academic year in the Inforum

We have long recognized the need for more job positions and work placements for iSchool students. We have and will continue to advocate for these positions within IS, as we are dedicated to providing students with challenging and rewarding experiences, while simultaneously exposing them to, and engaging them in the varied specialties of the information professionals that comprise Information Services.

**Elisa PRAXIS IN ACTION**
Now we’ll turn to how Information Services operates as a praxis-based model.

We reflect on our actions:
1. **As a team**, we implement an annual user survey. The survey provides us with an opportunity to review user feedback, and develop work plans for the upcoming year, that take into account the changing needs of our iSchool students.

2. **In our individual areas of work**, as we continue to grow specific services. In the area of promotion and outreach, for instance, we have revamped our signage, utilized Windows desktop backgrounds, LCD screens, and sign banners to advertise our resources and services. This has been both a response to users telling us that they don’t know the full breath of what we offer, as well as our commitment to greater accessibility. As well, in our instructional activities, we constantly modify our workshop content based on user evaluations, and go to the literature for inspiration and best practices.

3. **As circumstances dictate**: the information desk is the main point of contact between our staff and our users; it provides an opportunity for staff to reflect on how our policies and procedures impact our users, and to introduce new policies that improve user’s experience:
   - We now have extended loans on equipment.
   - We invite users to browse our course reserve shelves behind the desk.
   - We allow beverages in our space because we know how important caffeine is to studying! (Although common across campus now, we were one of the earliest, if not the first to permit coffee in the library.)
We act on our reflections through:

1. **Ongoing discussions between colleagues**: For example, by exploring the connections between collections and reference, our shared purpose, we developed new collaborative projects among colleagues, including themed book displays and bibliographies; and the book review project.

2. Sometimes, actions are also **Based on our own areas of interest**: For instance, the connection between cataloguing and public services: We were one of the first libraries at U of T to acquire and lend out equipment (such as computer tablets, ebook readers, and Yeti microphones) to students and faculty through the library circulation system. From a cataloguer's perspective, we create MARC records for books and journals in order to make them publicly discoverable. For this same reason, we started making publicly viewable MARC records for our equipment. Soon after, other libraries looked at the
MARC records we created for our lendable equipment, consulted us on the process, and began doing the same.

3. **As we grow and develop as professionals.** We go to conferences, connect with colleagues in other libraries and institutions, are inspired by what we learn, then come back and implement new ideas. We also strongly believe in giving knowledge and ideas back to our professional communities.
   
   - **One quick example of this is our IT team’s involvement** in the Ontario Universities Computing Conference and TechKnowFile conferences: Our IT team has presented at these conferences on topics like open source virtual desktop infrastructure and application delivery. By using the iSchool as a successful case study, they have not only synthesized what our Faculty has done, but they have also shared and added to the knowledge base across other academic institutions in Ontario.

**RESPONDING TO TRENDS IN INFORMATION SERVICES**

We strive to be just as responsive in how we develop and deliver our services. Throughout our history, we have acknowledged the importance of change, and as trends in delivery of information services reveal themselves, we try new things:

- Back in the ‘80s, we were one of the first libraries to open CD-ROM workstations to the public, and we paved the way at the U of T for putting the learning commons model into practice with the inception of the Inforum in 1997. These may seem historical now, but we’ve continued to change over the years:
- Our Inforum space transformation has been a dramatic example of this: e.g. We have moved less used reference material to the circulating collection while simultaneously freeing up space
for collaboration, through our creation of the free-form wifi area (of which Kathleen has already spoken).

- Becoming more active in marketing and promoting our services, resources, and facilities: added to job responsibilities of one of the librarians
- Technology loans service: ____________________________
- Historically, we were considered an early adopter of online searching within the U of T, when online searching came into being in the late 1970s.
- The Senior Developer, Alex worked with Kathleen to create the online open workshop materials repository on our website in an effort to be reflexive of scholarly communication trends, specifically open access
- Increasing the visibility of accessibility through participation on an OLA video initiative, offering our space for filming and a librarian “starring” in the video. A librarian creating an accessibility
checklist for events held at the Faculty.

- Our staff have contributed to province-wide task forces and national-level standards, including the development of Ontario library technician competencies, and the revision of the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules 2nd edition (or AACR2) – these have been informed by our own work experiences on the ground, and fed back into new iterations of standards.
- Finally, we care deeply about sustainability issues, and have introduced initiatives that act out our belief in greener solutions. So for instance, we have launched “green notebooks” to encourage recycling, and our we subscribe to the Green Tech program, which allows us to recycle all our discarded IT hardware while also recovering some infrastructure costs.

Nalini CHALLENGES & FUTURE PLANS
As the Faculty continues to grow in size, and in program areas, one of our challenges becomes how to develop services that will fulfil the needs of as many of our user communities as possible.

As student numbers grow, we are mindful that our facilities need to keep up with increasing demand for things like more group study space, and more quiet individual study space.

With the recent additions of new masters concentrations, such as Culture & Technology, and Knowledge Media Design programs, and the integration of the CCIT program, we need to grow and change in various ways, such as:

- Developing our collections,
- expanding our own knowledge areas
- creating more varied practical opportunities for students in these new areas,

As the information and heritage fields broaden and become more interdisciplinary it becomes more difficult to stay ahead, or even keep up-to-date with current research, and trends and developments of fields that continue to change and grow at a rapid pace.

In terms of our practice-providing and mentorship roles, we are able to engage with students who seek us out as mentors. However, it is a challenge to be able to reach more of our student body, as our numbers increase.

**In terms of FUTURE PLANS,**

We regularly engage in strategic planning as a unit, and at the moment, we are involved in an intense and comprehensive planning exercise through the work of the Task Force on Information Services. Perhaps some of you have already given input through the listening sessions that were recently held.

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The task force will present its report on strategic directions and recommendations on the role of IS within the Faculty sometime in May. We eagerly await this report!

**Nalini CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, we hope that we have given you a flavor of how we in Information Services engage in theory, practice, and praxis, in our philosophy and operations at an information facility within an information school. Thanks again for inviting us here, and for listening.

We love our work, and are privileged to practice our profession within a faculty that educates such professionals. We are enriched by being able to work with you all, in your classes, outside of your classes, and of course, in our place and yours, the Inforum.

You can keep in touch with us in various ways – follow us on Twitter and Facebook, use our help.ischool email, and of course, come talk to us in person.

As we always say, ask us anything! For this last part of our panel, we invite your comments, suggestions, and questions. Thank you.

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