Information Services Internship
Summer 2010 Final Report
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I. Introduction
Between May 2010 and August 2010 I worked as one of two interns for Information Services at the Faculty of Information. The job required a full-time, 35 hours-per-week commitment, wherein I was introduced to and involved in an array of individual and team projects undertaken by the information centre. It provided an incredible opportunity to learn what information professionals do and gave me the best education I’ve received from the iSchool thus far.

II. Personal Background
When I entered the Master of Information program at the University of Toronto in September 2009 to study Library and Information Science, I did not have any experience in the field. I pursued the degree perhaps for all the wrong reasons:

1. A university friend who is now an academic librarian told me I’d be perfect for the job;
2. I’d received a Master of Arts in English and discovered there weren’t many professional opportunities this degree would grant besides teaching posts, and after five years of teaching (two years at an American university, two years teaching EFL at a Chinese university, and a year teaching middle school in the States) I realized that I did not want to teach full time; and
3. In China I tried to start an English-language resource room for the English majors at the university and enjoyed the project.

Unfortunately, the iSchool didn’t help me narrow down my interests. Instead of choosing to specialize in libraries, I’ve divided my education between library classes and classes focusing on information policy, security, and privacy in an effort to expand my professional opportunities, and because after two years of soul searching in China I still didn’t know what to do.

Perhaps working in a library would help direct me the right way, but I was unable to get a job in any of dozens of libraries at the University of Toronto. Instead, I got a job as a barista at Starbucks, a job I’d had and enjoyed before. I also thought the location, inside Robarts Library, would be an asset, placing me in the way of librarians and library technicians, providing me the opportunity to get to know them and show them the enthusiasm and customer-oriented service I could bring to any job. It turned out I was right. It was through Starbucks that I met the person who would be my Information Services Internship supervisor, Kathleen Scheaffer, and her supervisor, Joe Cox.

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1 I feel it’s important to explain why I didn’t seek employment at one of the local public libraries, especially since Toronto Public Library (TPL) is one of the worlds largest library systems. While I would have loved to explore opportunities in the public library, as an international student I was limited to on-campus jobs for the first six months of my time at U of T. By the time I arrived on campus, many of the more professional jobs had been filled over the summer, and since I’d worked for Starbucks years before and loved that experience, it seemed like the best option available to me.
When the opportunity for the Information Services Internship arose, I didn’t hesitate to apply. I was called for an interview and then offered the coveted job. Thus, I spent my summer months learning from and collaborating with the members of the Information Services team.

III. Internship Duties
The Information Services Internship was divided into three components: core projects, other projects, and time spent at the Information Desk in the Inforum. The core projects, Kathleen explained, were the big projects she needed Jenaya Webb, the other intern, and me to complete during the course of the summer. The other projects were to be completed individually and were given to various members of the Information Services team.

Core Projects
There were four projects Kathleen presented on our first day on the job, which would be our priorities for the summer: an internal report based on the 2010 Information Services Survey; a follow-up, external report of the survey; a promotional brochure for incoming students; and a booklet meant to publicize Information Services' vision, services, and achievements. Kathleen directed the following projects:

- **Survey Project** (both internal and external): Each year Information Services conducts a survey to access and improve its services. Jenaya and I collected and analyzed both the quantitative and qualitative data from the 2010 Information Services User Survey. We sorted the data into themes assigned the themes into codes, and analyzed codes. With the analyzed data, we wrote an initial internal report, which we distributed to the Information Services staff. Then, with the support of each Information Services team, we solicited action plan items that we collected and presented in a second report, which was distributed the iSchool community.

- **Brochure**: Jenaya and I worked together to compile a promotional brochure to be distributed to all incoming students and available to all visitors of the Inforum. While Jenaya was responsible for the design and layout of the brochure, I contributed by providing copious photographs offered feedback on both the design and the written components.

- **Booklet**: Jenaya and I were also asked to produce a promotional booklet for Information Services. The 12-page booklet was the focus of the last half of the summer. I was responsible for providing many of the photographs and writing various sections of the booklet. I also helped gather written content from IS team leaders and was responsible for
much of the initial editing of the writing. The credit for the design and layout of the booklet belongs to Jenaya, but she frequently involved me in the design process.

Kathleen was a constant support throughout these projects, often coming in to help us with writing, ideas for photographs and design, editing, and offering encouragement as we devoted so many hours to these projects. Remarkably, every person in Information Services contributed to these projects, whether it was taking the time to meet with and give us their action plans for the external survey report, being willing to write certain sections of the booklet, sitting for an interview, or helping to edit content.

**Other Projects**

While we worked on the core projects, we were also working on various other projects. My projects included an evaluation of digital and print serials, a literature search, a libguide, the course evaluation/netbook giveaway, the 2010 Orientation and Fall Instructional Workshop Series, a project to remove deteriorating microfiche files from the collection, and launching a podcast series.

- **Serial Evaluation** (headed by Elisa Sze): Elisa provided us with a template to evaluate serial titles. We were asked to look at three journals of the same title, choosing one article from each at random and comparing the print version to all electronic versions available. I was able to complete 32 evaluations (letters L to O), finishing all but two of the Ls.

- **Literature Search** (headed by Nalini Singh): Early on Nalini asked me to do a literature search on the ways academic libraries are implementing user-generated tags in the library’s catalogue.

- **MMSt Libguide** (headed by Nalini Singh): Nalini asked each of the interns to help her with a libguide. I was assigned the Museum Studies discipline and collected print and electronic sources and professional associations for the guide. This project is still in progress.

- **Instructional Workshop Series** (headed by Kathleen Scheaffer): I collected statistics on the workshops IS offered and the number of participants from the 2009-2010 school year and then, with Jenaya’s help, deleted the thousands of names from the course lists. I also began to input the information for the 2010-2011 workshops onto the iSchool’s webpage.

- **Summer Course Evaluations/Netbook Giveaway** (headed by Kathleen Scheaffer, supported by Ivan Sestak, Alex Dvornyak, Joan Cherry, and Kathleen O’Brien): I was responsible for advertising the giveaway, which included continuous blogs, tweets, facebook status updates, and keeping
the dry-erase announcement board up to date. I was also given the task of contacting the contest winners and delivering the netbooks.

• **ERIC Microfiche Project** (headed by Elisa Sze): Elisa asked Jenaya and I to remove deteriorating microfiche files from the cabinets on the first floor, and then to see where else in UTL or outside places they are catalogued, record the information and then dispose of the microfiche. This project is still in progress.

• **The Informants Podcast Series** (headed by Kathleen Scheaffer): This project happened by accident, after interviewing Joe Cox for the booklet project. Kathleen liked the interview so much she thought a series would be a great way to promote the iSchool, as well as Information Services. I am responsible for every aspect of this project: researching and contacting the interviewee, writing questions and a script, and editing. Eventually, I will also probably be posting the podcasts, but I’m currently trying to build a storehouse of interviews. To date I have interviewed Susan Brown, Joe Cox, Judy Dunn, Seamus Ross, and Bruce Stewart. I will hopefully be interviewing Joan Cherry next and then will be moving on to the faculty.

Information Desk
In addition to these projects I also spent between 4 – 8 hours a week at the Information Desk. Nalini Singh and Anna Oh were instrumental to my success in this position, providing training sessions and support throughout the summer. Other members of the IS team also helped with desk issues, including Amanda Brooks, Joe Cox, Tony Lemmens, Nadia Moro, Kathleen Scheaffer, Elisa Sze, and Meera Thirunavukarasu. I enjoyed my hours at the Information Desk, as it provided me traditional library-like training and the chance to interact with Inforum users.

Challenges
I didn’t encounter many challenges this summer. The greatest obstruction to the job was time. There simply was not enough time to finish everything I wanted, and some projects, regretfully, are not finished. Hopefully I will have more chances to work on these in the coming year.

IV. Conclusion
If I’d just spent my entire at the desk I would have walked away from this experience feeling it was a success. But this experience was so much more than that. I was able to see what happens behind the scenes, including working with other departments within the Faculty. I dabbled in many areas of the profession: whether it was collections, course support, instruction, promotion, public service, and even the dirty work of report writing and brochure making. I was also granted the opportunity to participate in staff
meetings and the promotional/outreach meetings, meetings which have a direct impact on the future of Information Services.

I feel exceptionally lucky to have been granted this internship. I’ve never been a part of such a vibrant, supportive, forward-thinking team of people, who work collaboratively to achieve the goals which have been established. Jenaya and I often remarked at how great this work environment is, and there wasn’t a day I groaned about coming to work.

Now that I have “library” experience, I can’t say I feel any more sure about what my future holds, but I do feel confident that I’ve made a great decision in choosing to study Information. Whether I’m working in an academic library or some other type of work entirely, this internship has provided me with the confidence that I have the skills that would compliment my future work environments. I’ve transformed into a writer, an interviewer, a photographer, and an editor. But I’ve also learned that there is still so much more I need to learn and many issues I need to grapple with. Thankfully I have another year of school and a lifetime of learning ahead. And thankfully I have more time to be a part of this team and learn from your expertise. I’m still hoping to do more on promotion, the libguides, the serials, the microfiche, e-Presence, and, of course, the podcast.

V. Acknowledgements

I’d like to everyone I worked with at Information Services—Joe Cox, Nalini Singh, Elisa Sze, Ivan Sestak, Nadia Moro, Tony Lemmens, Anna Oh, Meera Thirunavukarasu, Alex Dvornyak, Gabriel Moga, Amanda Brooks, and Jenaya Webb—for providing me this opportunity, offering engaging and challenging work, and creating a fantastic work environment. I’d also like to thank Kathleen O’Brien, Christine Chan, and Glen Menzies for providing help and information when I needed it. Additionally I’d to thank Seamus Ross, Susan Brown, Judy Dunn, Joe Cox, and Bruce Stewart for allowing me to interview them for the podcast.

Finally, I’d like to thank Kathleen Scheaffer for being a remarkable supervisor to work with. She kept us on track while giving us the freedom to put our own spin on things or to pursue projects she didn’t have planned for us at the beginning of the summer. She kept it fun while keeping it challenging. She was always available and open to questions and feedback. She included us in the Promotional Outreach Group and treated us not as interns but as colleagues. I am extremely grateful for the mentorship she’s provided me. It’s been an incredible summer.