Information Services Internship Report

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Information Services Intern, Summer 2011

For:
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INTRODUCTION

In the spring of 2011, the Information Services Unit at the Faculty of Information created two summer intern positions for students entering their second year of study in the fall of 2011. The internships, which ran from May 9th to September 13th, were intended to provide students with first hand working experience at an information center and the opportunity to work with iSchool staff on a number of specialized projects. Lindsay McNiff and I were chosen as the successful applicants for the summer internship and were supervised by Kathleen Scheaffer, Librarian, Outreach, and Instructional Services Coordinator.

SUMMARY OF WORK

Information Desk Duties

As part of my summer internship, I typically spent 2-3 hours a week working at the Information Desk. My duties included: circulation services (checking out and discharging books, processing fines, searching for items), providing technical support for the printers/photocopiers/computers, booking rooms and equipment for members of the iSchool community, and answering reference questions.

Anna Oh, Circulation and Public Services Technician deserves thanks for her excellent training and willingness to help whenever I had a question or issue. Heading into fall 2011, I will continue to work as a student assistant at the Information Desk for the next school year and I look forward to continuing my work with the iSchool community.

Information Services User Survey 2011

Every year, Information Services conducts a survey to assess the iSchool student body’s satisfaction with the staff, facilities, services and resources. I was responsible for performing the qualitative data analysis on the survey results, consisting of written responses to four open-ended questions, using Nvivo 9. I began by importing the data from Survey Monkey into the appropriate source folders in Nvivo 9. When it came time to establish codes for analyzing the data, I consulted the list of themes created by last year’s interns for the Information Services User Survey 2010. I also created a few additional themes based on student responses. Based on this list of themes, an initial list of codes for each question was established. At this point, I assigned individual responses to one or more codes by selecting the relevant words, phrases, and comments and placing them in the appropriate code.

I then wrote a report on the analysis of the open ended survey responses, with sections on Things Students Like, Areas for Improvement, and Additional Comments and Suggestions. I structured the report by providing a brief description and some relevant comments for
every code used in the qualitative data analysis. I also created tables and bar graphs to visually represent the data collected during the qualitative analysis.

Finally, I worked collaboratively with Lindsay and Kathleen to create the survey follow-up Information Services Action Plan. We met with the Information Technology team; the Promotion, Outreach, and Instructional team; the Public Services and Collections team; and the Reference Services team to go over the results of the survey and create an action plan, consisting of specific action items, to address key student concerns via several long-term, strategic, promotional, and outreach initiatives.

**Directory Project**

In the summer of 2010, intern Jenaya Webb began to conduct some initial research on directory design and created an annotated bibliography of references on way-finding and signage use in libraries. In the summer of 2011, I met with Kathleen Scheaffer and the Promotions and Outreach Group, who again acknowledged the need for directories in the Inforum to aid students in efficiently locating resources and services. I began the project by consulting and taking notes from the excellent references found by Jenaya. I also conducted a walkthrough of the fourth and fifth floors of the Inforum, creating a detailed itemized list of all the spaces and resources to include.

Glen Menzies, Facility Coordinator at the Faculty of Information, graciously provided me with digitized versions of the architectural blueprints of the Inforum. Using Adobe Illustrator, I was able to simplify, modify, and add specialized content to these blueprints to transform them into directories. Seeking clarity in the design, I chose to use text very sparingly and instead include graphics and symbols to convey meaning. To maintain consistency with existing Inforum signage designed by Kathleen Scheaffer, the symbols for the Katherine Bell Cataloguing Lab, Group Study Rooms, Information Desk, Electronic Classrooms, Printers and Photocopiers, Public Workstations, and Collections and Study Area were replicated on the directory in the appropriate locations. Universal symbols for washrooms, elevators, utility rooms, and emergency exits were used as well. I created graphic representations of the remaining spaces, including the computer pods, lounge space, study tables, public study carrels, Ph.D. student carrels, and the Tassimo coffee maker. I included a legend to eliminate any ambiguities students might experience when consulting the directory. Finally, I consulted with Anna to ensure the directory reflected the accessible spaces in the Inforum.

After a final consultation with Kathleen, the directories have been printed and framed and will be hung on the fourth and fifth floors of the Inforum in the fall of 2011.
Facebook ‘Like’ Promotion

While brainstorming with the Promotions and Outreach Group during a summer meeting, I suggested that Information Services should run an orientation promotion encouraging incoming students to ‘like’ the iSchool@Toronto Information Services Facebook page. The rationale for this promotion was that Facebook is an effective way to provide iSchool students with updates on Information Services’ latest resources, services, events, and staff. I was put in charge of planning and organizing this promotion by Kathleen and together we decided that the promotion would run from September 12 to 16; the first one hundred students to ‘like’ the Facebook page and come to the Information Desk at the Inforum would collect a free Inforum tote bag.

To begin, I used Adobe Illustrator to create an LCD screen, computer background, and a banner to advertise the promotion (see Figures 2+3). I also wrote and circulated a document via email to Information Services staff outlining the procedures associated with the promotion. I conducted online research into a number of companies who sold promotional products, obtaining price quotes for a number of different tote bags. Kathleen and I decided on Has Marketing Ltd. because of the great value and quality of the tote bags offered, at which point I placed and followed up on the order. Throughout the project, Kathleen was invaluable in offering advice and guidance on how to maximize the efficacy of the promotion.

Ongoing into fall 2011, Information Services will sell the remaining tote bags at the Information Desk. As part of ongoing project work, I will create the promotional materials to advertise the sale, set up a till, and write/circulate a procedural email to staff.
The creation of a website for the Fall 2011 *Cite it Right Workshop* compromised my main project work from mid-July to mid-September. I worked on this project under the advisory and direction of Joe Cox, Director, Information Services, with additional technical support from Ivan Sestak, Senior IT Administrator, and Alex Dvornyak, Senior Web Developer.

During my first meeting with Joe, he expressed a desire to add a self-assessment quiz to *Cite it Right* in order for students to test their personal citation skills. I conducted some initial online research, searching university websites to locate existing quizzes that tested student knowledge of best citation practices in APA, MLA, and Chicago. I also conducted
research on the use of educational assessments in higher education, ultimately preparing a report for Joe on best practices for creating an educational assessment. Topics included the purpose of assessments, how to use assessments to achieve learning targets, and advantages and tips for writing and using short answer, matching, true/false, and multiple choice questions.

After consulting with Joe, it was decided that I would build a standalone website that would serve as a citation resource for the iSchool community. To maintain consistency with the recently re-launched iSchool website, the Cite it Right website would be built using Drupal 6. As a novice to Drupal, I read and watched a number of online tutorials, referred to Using Drupal by Angela Byron et al., and discussed the project with Ivan and Alex, eventually building a demo site that allowed me to learn the fundamentals of Drupal; in brief, I learned how to use modules to extend site functionality, design page layouts using panels and blocks, create custom content types, and use views functionality to create dynamic lists of content.

Work then began in earnest on the website for Cite it Right. Through regular meetings with Joe, I narrowed down the user requirements for the site and created the navigational menus and tabs, the physical layouts of the pages, and the necessary content types. I also researched and uploaded the resources, images, and other content to the site. Content included workshop materials (including lecture slides and lecture videos), write-ups on a number of citation software programs, information about the three style manuals used at the iSchool (ALA, MLA, Chicago), and a twenty question, true/false quiz written by Joe. The website was used for the Fall 2011 Cite it Right workshops, where students took the self-assessment quiz and consulted the website for other citation resources.

LibGuide - Information Systems & Design Path

Under the guidance of Nalini Singh, Librarian, References Services and Web Content Coordinator, I was responsible for researching the content and creating a LibGuide for students enrolled in the Information Systems & Design (IS&D) Path at the Faculty of Information. The LibGuide I designed contained the following pages: Home, e-Journals, Featured Books, Web Resources, Get Help, and Other Resources. Of particular interest is the Featured Books page, containing print books available at the Inforum, a widget to search the University of Toronto Library Catalogue, and electronic books available online. The Web Resources page offers practical guidance, including a few topical TED Talks, web development tutorials, and online reference manuals for databases and programming languages.

As a student currently enrolled in this path, I was in the unique position of being able to consult my course syllabi from the IS&D Path and include relevant resources in the LibGuide. I also extensively consulted the University of Toronto Library Catalogue for relevant and current resources to include in the LibGuide. Thanks go to my fellow intern Lindsay McNiff – a wonderful feature of the LibGuide is the ability for users to share pages. Lindsay generously shared a page she created, Other Resources, for me to include in the
IS&D Libguide; this page contains resources on newspapers, magazines, statistics, encyclopedias, and other reference materials.

Collections Development

Under the guidance of Elisa Sze, Librarian, Collections & Public Services Coordinator, I was trained in the ongoing project of Collections Development, researching and sourcing new materials to be added to the Inforum’s collection. As part of this project, I examined both publisher websites and current periodicals available at the Inforum for newly published titles. If the title was not available in the University of Toronto Library Catalogue, I included it in a report which I forwarded to Elisa on a monthly basis, at which point she would make the final ordering decision. I will continue working on this project as part of my student assistant responsibilities for the upcoming year.

Other Promotional Activities for Information Services

As part of my ongoing responsibilities as an intern, I was responsible for posting daily to the Information Services Facebook page and Twitter feed. I varied my postings between iSchool-related activities/news/events and popular articles/features found online about everything from book digitization to the privatization of the Toronto public libraries. I also created LCD screens and computer backgrounds to advertise current Information Services’ promotions; an example of this advertisement is the LCD screen I created featuring the Fall 2011 Instructional Series.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank everyone at Information Services – Joe Cox, Nalini Singh, Elisa Sze, Ivan Sestak, Nadia Moro, Tony Lemmens, Anna Oh, Meera Thirunavukarasu, Alex Dvornyak, and Gabriel Moga – for welcoming me to the Inforum team and offering help and guidance as I completed the projects of my internship. I’d like to thank my fellow intern, Lindsay McNiff, for a great summer working together; your honest advice, innovative ideas, and awesome editing skills were greatly appreciated. Finally, I would like to thank my supervisor, Kathleen Scheaffer, for her mentorship, guidance, and support during the summer.

INTERN EXPERIENCE

I entered the MI program straight from my undergrad, having completed an HBA in History at the University of Toronto. As I entered my first semester of graduate school, I was still unsure what path I wanted to pursue at the Faculty of Information. I began studying Knowledge Management and Information Management, but realized in the course of my studies that my interests lay more in Information Systems & Design. I was so excited to be chosen as one of the summer interns at Information Services, recognizing what a great
learning experience it would be to work at an information center at the University of Toronto.

From the very beginning of the summer, Kathleen ensured that Lindsay and I were given projects that were relevant to our academic interests and would give us valuable skills when we graduated and began our careers. As I had a burgeoning interest in information systems, the opportunity to design and build a website to be used in the Cite it Right workshops was an incredibly rewarding experience, from learning Drupal 6 to designing and implementing an online system. I also enjoyed working with datasets, performing the qualitative data analysis for the Information Services User Survey 2011. Finally, the promotional projects I worked on, including the Facebook ‘Like’ Promotion and the Directory Project, gave me great new technical skills from learning and using the Adobe Design Suite and a deeper understanding of the importance of engaging the user and meeting their information needs.

It’s been an incredibly rewarding summer. Although I had already completed my first year of studies, this internship has made me feel ever more a part of the iSchool community and I’m very thankful for the people I met and the experiences I gained working at Information Services.