

Title: Domain-centric and cross-disciplinary educational opportunities in iSchools

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Abstract: Information schools and programs have always had, broadly speaking, a focus on specialized information services, going back many years (e.g., art librarianship, music librarianship, health librarianship). Nowadays, partly due to the rapid advances of information technologies the core information needs and practices in many disciplines are also changing quickly. It is not uncommon to find among iSchools, tracks, certificates, and degrees being offered that are domain-centric (e.g., health informatics, digital humanities). Furthermore, Digital Humanities provide the potential to bring together 'old', well-established departments such as archaeology, linguistics, history, religion, ethnology and others to develop new programs and new educational profiles. Such offerings are becoming increasingly common in iSchools. Hence it will be highly useful to create an interactive session which allows seasoned academics, researchers, and professionals to discuss, share, and learn about approaches for integrating domain-centric educational opportunities into core educational programs of iSchools.

Description:

- *Purpose and Intended Audience:* As the field of information continues to develop, the practices, tools, and even the ethos/values associated with the field require continuous scrutiny, reflections, and perhaps even revision to keep up with the

other scholarly fields and societal practices associated with those fields. One particular area is the application of information theories, methods/techniques, and tools in the context of other fields, especially in what we often refer to as domain-centric and specialized services that are highly tuned toward specific fields. Information schools and programs have always had, broadly speaking, a focus on specialized information services, going back many years (e.g., art librarianship, music librarianship, health librarianship). Nowadays, partly due to the rapid advances of information technologies the core information needs and practices in many disciplines are also changing quickly. It is imperative that the training of specialized information researchers and professionals take into account the changes, but the content and methods of training in our field must be carefully calibrated in terms of their relevance and impact on the associated domains. It is not uncommon to find among iSchools, tracks, certificates, and degrees being offered that are domain-centric (e.g., health informatics). Furthermore, Digital Humanities provide the potential to bring together 'old', well-established departments such as archaeology, linguistics, history, religion, ethnology and others to develop new programs and new educational profiles. Such offerings are becoming increasingly common in iSchools. Hence it will be highly useful to create an interactive session which allows seasoned academics, researchers, and professionals to discuss, share, and learn about approaches for integrating domain-centric educational opportunities into core educational programs of iSchools.

Proposed activities including agenda, ramp-up (development), and follow-through: Given the time constraint allocated for interactive sessions, the focus will be on two types of programmatic engagements:

- 1) Development of curricula for specialized and domain-centric fields (e.g., a graduate certificate or a master's degree in medical / health informatics, digital humanities); and,
- 2) Career-development activities such as internships and industry-based thesis or capstone projects.

The main aim will be to highlight for the attendees how such programmatic engagements are developed, the critical barriers in creating them, and ways to sustain them over long-term.

The topics to be covered include:

- 1) Strategic selection of domains and their fit to the broader iSchool program (school/department);
- 2) Ways to plan, develop and launch such domain-centric programs;

- 3) How to develop academic collaborations within and outside the core programs to ensure success (e.g., with medical programs, with the journalism/communication department or humanities departments); and,
- 4) Opportunities and development of partnerships with outside organizations that provide the domain-centric services (e.g., with hospitals, with medical IT or media companies, the GLAM sector, and with government organizations).

The event will be organized as an interactive session with speakers presenting both opportunities and challenges in respect to the above topics, sharing experiences from their own institutions. The audience will be invited to join one chosen group and actively contribute to specific questions the moderators will ask, following the framework of the four main topics. The first step will be that all participants will discuss in small groups. In the second step, the key speakers will present their experiences. Finally, a joint discussion will take place. After the session, a report will be created to share major findings and implications for future developments.

- *Relevance to the Conference/Significance to the Field:* Offerings such as tracks, certificates, and degrees that are domain-centric and cross-disciplinary (e.g., health informatics, digital humanities) are becoming increasingly common in iSchools. Hence it will be highly useful to create an interactive session which allows seasoned academics, researchers, and professionals to discuss, share, and learn about approaches for integrating domain-centric educational opportunities into core educational programs of iSchools.

Duration: A single 90-minute session.