Title: When iSchool meets D-School

Organizer: ginger coons, Digital Cultures Research Centre, UWE Bristol

Key Participants: N/A the session will be driven by the concerns and experiences of attendees

Abstract: "Information," writ large, has always encompassed a broad set of disciplines. While some iSchools lean towards Informatics and Human-Computer Interaction, others build on their library heritage to encompass fields like Book History. A comparatively new trend is the iSchool as graduate-level design school, offering courses and concentrations in fields like User Experience Design. What happens when iSchool meets D-School? What are the implications for students, teaching staff, and the identity of the iSchool? What capacity does it take for iSchools to provide education that is at the intersection of art and computation? In this session, the floor will be open for participants to discuss the experiences, ramifications, and tactics of negotiating design education in an iSchool setting.

Description:
Purpose and intended audience
This session will convene a "Birds of a Feather"-style session aimed at bringing together educators and scholars interested in thinking about what happens when information schools take on the task of providing design education. Engaging anyone in the iSchool community with an interest in design education, the session is, in part, concerned with questioning what role design courses are currently playing in iSchools, and what role participants might want them to play (or not). As such, the primary aim of the session is to think, together, about different kinds of design education, and which can/ought to be delivered in iSchools. The session is especially targeted towards educators engaged in the development and delivery of design-related courses in iSchools, as they have the capacity to bring concrete experiences to the discussion. For the same reason, students are also very welcome.

Proposed activities
The session will primarily be an opportunity to have a lightly structured chat about the issues outlined above. While, admittedly, an open discussion is not necessarily the most innovative format, I believe that the topic is rich enough (and contentious enough) that a discussion will be a suitably stimulating format.

While the discussion will primarily be about sharing the knowledge and views of attendees, I will prepare a set of questions in advance which can act as catalysts for discussion if necessary. Before the session takes place, I will conduct a small review of design-focused curricula currently in use in iSchools, which will inform the prompt questions.

The session will be collectively documented on an Etherpad (a form of Open Source networked collaborative writing). This style of documentation will give all attendees the opportunity to include their interpretation of the discussion, and also provides an opportunity for those who are less comfortable speaking to contribute to the discussion, as it happens.

After the session, I will organize and circulate the text from the Etherpad to all participants, and provide links to any relevant materials that have been mentioned.

Relevance to the conference/Significance to the field
Both Information and Design are terms which encompass an extremely broad range of activities. The broad mandate of iSchools in general gives them the opportunity to individually focus their teaching activities on areas in which they have the capacity or interest to deliver strong program offerings. In some iSchools (including the iSchool at the University of Toronto, where I was, by

turns, both a student and an instructor), there has been a movement towards offering design-centric programs and courses. However, as many iSchools have existing competence in areas like Informatics and Human Computer Interaction, it can be all too easy to approach design education from a procedural standpoint—a standpoint which differs from more classical conceptions of design education.

Curriculum design in iSchools can be seen as tied to current ideas of what an information professional is or does, what their role in the workforce is ultimately meant to be, and what competencies they should be able to demonstrate. An expansion of the remit of information professionals (something Bonnici, Subramaniam & Burnett, [2009] suggest has taken place over the last several decades) means that the boundaries are constantly shifting. The increasing importance and pervasiveness of information in society increases the field in which information professionals can feel capable of acting (Wiggins & Sawyer, 2011). As this expands to encompass design activities through areas like User Experience Design, it behooves educators in iSchools to consider their own role and responsibilities in teaching design in an information context.

Duration: One session

Special requirements: No special requirements

References

Bonnici, L. J., Subramaniam, M. M., & Burnett, K. (2009). Everything old is new again: The Evolution of library and information science education from LIS to iField. *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science, 50*(4), 263-274.

Wiggins, A. & Sawyer, S. (2012). Intellectual diversity and the faculty composition of iSchools. *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology, 63*(1), 81-21.