Statement of Competency H

H. Demonstrate proficiency in the use of current information and communication technologies, and other related technologies, as they affect the resources and uses of libraries and other types of information providing entities

The advent of the Internet as a means of communication and information sharing has changed the way that libraries interact with the world and with their users, including the expectations that users have of libraries and the services they can offer. Since 2005, we have also seen the arrival of what is called “Web 2.0”. Web 2.0 is a catch all term for features that allow users to interact with web-based content through such means as:

- Really Simple Syndication (RSS) feeds, which allows users to subscribe to content and have it delivered to them directly, as opposed to searching for it
- Widgets – these are miniature programs that allow functionality to be incorporated into a website without programming the functionality itself.
- Social media services such as Facebook, YouTube and Flickr, which allow users to create their own content, including video and photos and share it with others without having to write a program to do so.
- Blogging – this allows users to publish their own works, on an ongoing basis, and is yet another way of sharing information with a large audience.

So, what does this mean for libraries? What it means is that libraries now have the means of communicating with a larger audience and larger community of users. Through this new capability, libraries are able to integrate themselves more fully into the community, and provide content and
information on their sites that users can access from any computer or device with a mobile browser (such as an iPhone, iPad or Android phone).

In addition to providing content, librarians can also provide service. Many libraries are now able to provide 24-hour reference service through web-based chat rooms or instant messaging (IM). Many libraries use Facebook and Twitter as ways of maintaining a presence in the social media world.

Another feature that has arisen in recent years is that of the Knowledge Building Center (KBC). This is an online tool used by educational institutions in the K-12 realm as well as those of higher learning wherein teachers post lessons and quizzes, and which contain tools for interaction among students, and between students and teachers. Educational libraries often play a key role in that not only do some academic libraries host such KBCs, but also in that teachers are able to link directly to files that are in library catalogs.

In order for these features to work, librarians must know how to use them in order to be able to provide service to users. In addition to knowing how to use chat and IM services, many librarians now take courses in web-design and database programming, and are able to make quick changes and edits to web-pages as well as add new features to web-sites. Thus, in addition to being organizers of information, librarians are now communicators with the world beyond the library walls.

Evidence and Criteria for Selection

1. LIBR 240 – Information Technology Tools and Applications – Final Project

In this class I learned not only the basics of web design, but also the basics of Web 2.0 features as described in the above description of this competency. For the final project, I had to incorporate all of the design elements that I had been taught, as well as functional Web 2.0 elements such as RSS feeds, widgets and embedded video clips. In addition, this site employs
elements of JavaScript, which is used to create a means whereby users can input data, and which was used to create a form by which users could contact me as well as a slideshow on the “History Features” Page, as well as XML, which was used to create a sample database whose output is seen on the “About Us” page.

This evidence demonstrates my ability to use basic web design tools to construct functional websites, such as may be used in the construction of library websites or online public access catalogs (OPACs).

*Note:* this project was originally hosted on the senna.sjsu.edu server. However, I moved all the files to my own personal website as I no longer had access to the senna.sjsu.edu server after the conclusion of the Spring 2009 semester during which I completed this project.

2. LIBR 210 – Reference and Information Services – Reference Interview Analysis

For this assignment I had to pretend that I was a library user seeking information at a library, and to review the responses I received from the librarians from whom I sought information. The assignment called for conducting three such requests. One of the reference requests had to be conducted using an online service, for which I chose the New York Public Library’s “Ask NYPL/Chat With A Librarian” chat service. For each of the reference requests including the online one, I analyzed and reviewed the service provided in each instances to see whether the responses provided me with the information I was looking for to an extent that I found satisfactory.

I feel that the reference interview request that I did using the New York Public Library’s chat service demonstrates my ability to understand both the limitations and potential
inherent in such a system from the point of view of the information seeker, with a view to using this perspective to overcome the system’s limitations when conducting such electronic systems as a practicing librarian.

3. LIBR 250 – Design and Implementation of Instructional Strategies for Information Professionals – Module 2 Knowledge Building Center

One of the goals of this course was to design an a knowledge building center (KBC), which is an online interface, such as San Jose State University’s ANGEL Learning system or UCSF’s Collaborative Learning Environment (CLE) which uses the Moodle interface, and which is hosted by UCSF’s library. The idea behind a KBC is that it allows students to work on their own outside of the classroom setting, and allows teachers to provide access to electronic resources for use in assignments, as well as to conduct assessments of students’ learning. A great deal of other functionality is built into these systems as well, including the ability for students to communicate directly with each other and the teacher, as well as access grades so that students can track their academic process. For this assignment, we were provided with a template in Google Sites (https://sites.google.com/site/knowledgebuildingcenter/), to use to design our own KBC. Aside from the design aspect of the KBC, we were required to include a lesson plan and sections on assessment, as well as designated areas for workspaces such as group wiki pages and discussion boards (though it was not required that they be active), tutorials, areas where students could communicate with each other and the teacher. I chose the topic of Existential Literature based and designed the assessments and desired outcomes based on the California State Board of Education English-Language Arts Content Standards for
California for Public Schools: Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve, as well as the California State Board of Education's Recommended Literature Search for Reading and Language Arts.

This evidence demonstrates my ability to use technology to create learning interfaces for students, as well as to successfully work with such technologies as Google Sites. The pertinence of this assignment to the library field is that it demonstrates the applicability of information technology to education. It is important for many teacher-librarians who work in at the primary and secondary school level (K-12) and who have a close working relationship with teachers to not only be familiar with but be able to use the same learning technologies that as the teachers and students, partially in order for the teacher-librarians to be able to contribute resources (such as links to library-based resources) directly to the site, but more importantly so that they can contribute to the students’ learning process.


At the time of this writing (October 1, 2010) I am undertaking a non-archival internship at the University of San Francisco’s Gleeson Library/Geschke Center. One of my regular projects at this internship is to create blog entries about the Reference Books of the Week on Gleeson Gleanings, which is the library’s blog, and which is accessible through the library’s home page. This entails not only adding content to the blog in the form of written text, but also images and hyperlinks to the locations of the records for each reference book in the library’s catalog. Gleeson gleanings uses WordPress, which is one of the major platforms for creating blogs, and which has its own unique set of procedures for creating and editing blog content. Figure 1 shows the listing of the posts I have created, and from which I can edit posts as needed.
Although there are currently 239 posts on the blogs, I can only see the ones that I created (in addition to the blog post submitted as evidence, I completed an earlier blog post). Figure 2 shows what the interface looks like for creating a blog. In addition to the visual edit, there is also a tab that allows HTML editing, which is sometimes necessary to ensure that the post renders properly in the final blog.

This evidence demonstrates my ability to work with modern communication technologies that provide libraries with a means to easily and quickly communicate information about library...
programs and events to current and potential users. This is crucial in helping libraries maintain a presence in the online world.

**Conclusion**

All institutions are influenced by the current technology of their age, and libraries are no different. Each advance in technology has expanded both the scope of library collections as well as libraries’ means of communicating with the world at large. The current technological era has expanded both of these features in ways never previously imagined, and have reshaped the way that libraries interact with the world at large and with their users, as well as redefining what the provision of access to information means. Just as the definition of information is expanded, so is the definition of the information professional. Current technologies also require a far greater degree of expertise in order for librarians and others to successfully make use of them. This also expands the scope of librarians’ knowledge and skills far beyond those of librarians in the past. In order for libraries to remain viable institutions in the modern world it is necessary for librarians to be able to use all the tools of the modern age.