LIS 694 (will change to LIS 675) Database Content Evaluation - Spring, 2003

Class meets on Thursdays 1:00-3:40 p.m.

Instructor: Dr. Péter Jacsó, Associate Professor
Hamilton # H3, Phone: 956-5817  Office hours: 4-6 p.m. on class days + on appointments
E-mail to jacso@hawaii.edu (mind the spelling, include LIS 694 in the subject line)
http://www2.hawaii.edu/~jacso/courses.htm

Course Description

To study the objectives, principles and methods of evaluating digital information sources (especially databases), for advising users in selecting databases and Web sites most appropriate for their information needs, and for making database licensing decisions. Prerequisite: none, but LIS 601 useful.

Objectives

LIS Program Learning Objectives

1. Understand the theories and processes for selecting and organizing information sources
2. Attain basic competencies and knowledge that are essential for providing, managing and designing information services in a variety of information environments
3. Attain basic competency in the latest and specialized information technologies
4. Understand the above objectives within the perspective of prevailing technologies

Course Learning Objectives

1. To learn about the criteria that are appropriate for objective evaluation of information resources
2. To become familiar with the virtues and vice of digital information resources
3. To understand the role of librarians and information specialists in recommending databases for users, and for licensing by their library
4. To learn the practice of evaluating and comparing the content of databases.

Methodology

A combination of lectures, demonstrations and class-room discussions.

Course Assignments and Grading

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Closed book exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm paper</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term paper</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class-room participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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In the closed book exam students will have to answer 10 questions (from a pool of 20 questions) that are discussed in the first five chapters of the textbook and/or in the classroom. Class-room participation can earn up to 10 points depending on the contribution made by the student.

In the midterm paper students will compare two databases in terms of their subject scope, size, composition, time span, depth, currency, journal base, geographic and language coverage, and record content using simple test searches. Guidelines will be provided by March 13th.

The purpose of the midterm paper is to prove the students’ knowledge of the procedures and principles of test searching. It is not a definitive evaluation which cannot be done with a few test queries. The midterm paper is due on
March 31st at 4 p.m. Late submission is penalized by deducting 5 points for every 24 hour delay starting at 4:00 p.m. on the day of expected submission.

In the term paper students will present their case for canceling or maintaining the subscription of a database by UH based on its comparison with alternative databases. The evaluation criteria will be similar to the ones used for the mid-term paper but using more test searches and including such criteria as accuracy, consistency, completeness, and the quality of indexing and abstracts in the databases. Further details will be provided by April 10th. The term paper is due on May 10th at 4:00 p.m. Earlier submission is gladly accepted. Late submission will be penalized by deducting 5 points for every 24-hour delay starting from the above deadline, but after May 15 papers are not accepted.

Readings and Instructional Materials

The textbook is: Péter Jacsó. Content Evaluation of Textual CD-ROM and Web Databases, Libraries Unlimited, Englewood: 2001. In addition to the articles about the PubSCIENCE spectacle which summarize the serious content deficiencies of a database which was shut down at the end of 2002, some short articles and database reviews may be assigned during the course. The slides to be presented during classes will be available as digital notebooks in a series of PowerPoint files. They require Internet Explorer 5.5 if students want to consult them after classes.

Course Schedule

Session 1. Course Overview
   Introduction to Evaluation

Session 2. The PubSCIENCE spectacle

Session 3. Digital Resources, Producers and Publishers
   Database Content Evaluation Criteria

Session 4. Database Subject Scope

Session 5. Database Dimensions
   - Size and Composition

Session 6. Database Dimensions (cont.)
   - Time Span
   - Depth
   - Currency

Session 7. Database Source Coverage
   - Types of Sources
   - Journal Base

Session 8. Closed Book Exam (from Chapters 1-5)
   Database Source Coverage (cont.)
   - Geographic & Language Coverage

Session 9. Record Content

Session 10. Accuracy
   Consistency

Session 11. Completeness

Session 12. Quality of Subject Indexing
Session 13. Discussion about Term Paper
Session 14. Quality of Abstracts
Session 15. Cost Considerations & The Future