SLO#6: The Student Applies Appropriate Technology for Effective Information Services

Out of the entire student learning objectives that govern this entire program, this is the one that undoubtedly resonates with me the most. Even before I began my adventure in this program, I knew that I am going to have to familiarize myself with the different library technologies that are used to create top quality information services. In general, technology is always dynamic. It is rarely stagnant and evolves to the next stage whenever a new situation comes up. Learning the ins and outs of the technologies that different departments of a library use would be one of my greatest challenges ever. Not only that, I also wanted to learn how to quickly adapt to the latest version, so that I don't use up a lot of time playing catch up. Even though trying to wrangle in the bucking bronco that is technology has never been one of my strong suits, I was still eager to leap into the fray. In my mind I was thinking that if I don't learn how to work with a diverse set of information technologies now, I am going to have to learn them later when I am on the job. Having the ability to utilize the technology that is best suited to the service that the user needs is vital for the librarian's mission in regards to making sure that their access is quick and painless.

At the beginning of my quest to overcome the towering, technological obstacle that stood before me, I was introduced to some of the general library software that is used to provide resources to users. One of those basic information technologies that I got acclimated with was the LibGuide software that librarians use to present relevant sources in a set of specialized web pages. In my LIS 620 class, I was tasked with creating my very first LibGuide, which would comprise of sources that are related to a subject of my choice. When I was trying to figure out the different features of the LibGuide software, I was feeling nervous. While I had no problems in trying to find sources that were relevant to my chosen subject, which is the role that the Olympic Games play in international relations, presenting them together in a neat, clean collection would be the real challenge. Initially, I was struggling at first in regards to figuring out how to create different tabs and getting my sources in them and published. Like everything else that I have faced in the past, I took a deep breath, took my time, and eventually figured out all of the nuances of the software.

It is what allowed me to not only give an awesome presentation on my LibGuide to the class, but also to get a near perfect score on it as well. That experience from 620 would make my next go round with the software easier. My next bout with LibGuides came in the form of a group assignment from my LIS 610 class, where I worked with a group of my peers to create a LibGuide that specifically serves users of a library type. In our group's case, we were tasked with creating a LibGuide for an academic library. I personally had some fun with this one, because I chose to create my tab around the theme of music. Combined that with the previous experience I gained from 620, and the result was that I had a much more comfortable time with this go around. Both of these pre-technological assignments have taught me that the big, bad, beast that is technology is not as bad as I have been making it out to be in my head. All it takes to master a new information technology is to take it one step at a time and not be afraid to ask for

assistance when you need it. Once you do that, then you will be able to effectively apply that technology towards creating information services that target specific user needs.

That was something that I've trying really hard to keep to heart as I went into my next class that is all about making use of the latest in information technology. LIS 631, which is Emerging Tech Trends, really got me up close and personal with the different technological tools that libraries use to both gather information and create effective services. These tools range from social media to geographic information system (GIS) to programming websites like Scratch. As somebody who has the most basic knowledge of technology that you can imagine, I was in awe of some of these things that librarians have in their repertoire. If I had to pick one tool that was one of my favorites to use when I was in 631, it would probably be the GIS assignment that I did. Using a GIS-mapping website called SimplyAnalytics to gather information using different variables, I would hypothetically write up a report for the manager of my chosen library to use for their services. While this was all just an exercise that was designed for the purpose of getting me familiar with the technology, I really did felt like that I was truly applying this technology towards helping a library create good, effective services. It also helped to further ease my worries about acclimating to seemingly complicated technologies. That big, bad beast that I created in my mind was getting smaller with every technological assignment I was given.

Recently, I tore down that intimidating illusion with my latest technological assignment. To further increase my knowledge with library information technologies, I decided to take LIS 644, which is Digital Libraries. It was in this particular class that I got introduced to digital library software called CONTENTdm, which is a digital collection management system. Like the other technology assignments before, this was a bit intimidating for me at first. However, I soon got over the anxiety and tackled this assignment like a boss. This is software that a lot of libraries use for their digital collections, which I strongly believe will be the future of the library field. Therefore, I was determined to learn and master this software for the purpose of coming into my future professional career prepared. I wanted to be able to effectively put this system to use for when I create my own information services for the people of my community.

That was my motivation behind each and every technology assignment and course I completed. Even though I was initially scared of these seemingly complex software and tools, I was still determined to press on. If I can master the ability to work with different information technologies and apply them effectively to different user needs, then I will be successful in my future library career. Like I have mentioned many times in the past, if I don't learn these technologies now, I am going to have to later on. I aim to be that determined and enthusiastic cowboy that rides that technological bronco into the horizon without getting knocked off. You are looking at someone who will always be eager to learn new information technologies in the interest of using them to create services that will help users maintain their right to be informed.

Artifacts

LIS 610: – Collection Management – Group Collection and Advocacy Project - https://uncg-lis.libguides.com/c.php?g=875089&p=6283354

LIS 620: – Information Sources and Services – Pathfinder/LibGuide - https://uncg-lis.libguides.com/c.php?g=827896&p=5911185

LIS 631: – Emerging Technological Trends in Information Access – Assignment 2: GIS Mapping

LIS 644: – Digital Libraries – Assignment 2: Building a Digital Collection