



LIS Program Expectations of Incoming Student Competencies with Information and Communications Technology

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Motivation

Continued incorporation of information and communications technology (ICT) into the curricula of library and information science schools presents the challenge of dealing with the diverse technology backgrounds and competencies of incoming students.

This poster shows initial findings from an examination of the published requirements and expectations that ALA-accredited LIS programs have of incoming students' knowledge and skills, highlighting the areas identified as important for student success.

Method

We conducted a web content analysis of 57 ALA-accredited LIS programs, evaluating each according to a list of skills and concepts falling into four high-level categories: Knowledge, Skills, Hardware/Software Requirements, and Support/Remediation Strategies. An iterative method using two assessors was used to refine an initial set of categories and analyze the web pages. Measurements of inter-rater agreement on a sample of 12 programs were generally high, with a 90% agreement for 37 of the 45 categories and Cohen's Kappa of at least 0.60 for 32 categories. Additional validation and analysis is under way.

Initial Findings

With a few exceptions, we observed little consensus on the knowledge and skills expected of incoming students.

Programs commonly express expectations in terms of skills rather than conceptual knowledge.

Expectations are expressed at a variety of granularities and specificity.

Conceptual knowledge expectations were more commonly observed among LIS schools than I-schools.

Most commonly identified categories of knowledge and skills

The table shows the number of programs identifying each category as expected of incoming students, for all programs, and broken down by "traditional" LIS schools and I-schools. Categories identified by fewer than 5 programs (18) are excluded from the table. Percentages are relative to the column.

	All Schools (N=57)	LIS Schools (N=42)	I-Schools (N=15)
Knowledge			
General working knowledge of an operating system	15 (26%)	13 (31%)	2 (13%)
Ability to define computer terminology such as CPU, hard drive, RAM etc.	5 (9%)	5 (12%)	0 (0%)
Knowledge of IT terminology	5 (9%)	5 (12%)	0 (0%)
Skills			
General Computing			
Folder manipulation i.e. creating directories, saving to disc, renaming folders, finding files etc.	17 (30%)	13 (31%)	4 (27%)
Install and uninstall software	10 (18%)	8 (19%)	2 (13%)
Compress and uncompress files	8 (14%)	5 (12%)	3 (20%)
Log on and log off	7 (12%)	6 (14%)	1 (7%)
Upload and download files	6 (11%)	5 (12%)	1 (7%)
Use removable media such as a USB drive to save files	6 (11%)	3 (7%)	3 (20%)
Use a mouse	5 (9%)	4 (10%)	1 (7%)
Copy and paste from one application to another	5 (9%)	5 (12%)	0 (0%)
Use online and offline help and manuals to learn how to use software applications	5 (9%)	5 (12%)	0 (0%)
Programming			
Hand code a simple web page using HTML	6 (11%)	3 (7%)	3 (20%)

	All Schools (N=57)	LIS Schools (N=42)	I-Schools (N=15)
Skills (cont.)			
Application Use			
Use a word processor to create and edit a text document	31 (54%)	25 (60%)	6 (40%)
Create a spreadsheet using spreadsheet software	22 (39%)	16 (38%)	6 (40%)
Use a web browser	18 (32%)	14 (33%)	4 (27%)
Use presentation software to create a presentation	17 (30%)	13 (31%)	4 (27%)
Database Software	13 (23%)	12 (29%)	1 (7%)
Firewall or Virus Protection Software	8 (14%)	4 (10%)	4 (27%)
Internet			
Open, compose, and send email	24 (42%)	20 (48%)	4 (27%)
Add and open attachments to email	15 (26%)	11 (26%)	4 (27%)
Use of a search engine	13 (23%)	8 (19%)	5 (33%)
Use email lists, listservers	8 (14%)	6 (14%)	2 (13%)
Research subject and locate resources using an OPAC	7 (12%)	4 (10%)	3 (20%)
Ability to transfer files to a remote server using FTP	6 (11%)	4 (10%)	2 (13%)
Knowledge of online information resources	6 (11%)	3 (7%)	3 (20%)
Set up an internet connection and connect to the internet	5 (9%)	3 (7%)	2 (13%)

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