PhD Seminar II (Synopsis of the doctoral thesis)

The Summer School in User Studies is directly interconnected with the PhD Programme Knowledge Society and Information Transfer of the Department of Library and Information Studies, University of Zadar. Under the Students Seminar II a PhD Forum is open so the students can present their work on the doctoral thesis and get reflections from the professors and other Summer School participants.

THE ABSTRACTS:

Snježana Stanarević
University of Zadar, Postgraduate program Knowledge Society and the Transfer of Information

Information needs and information behavior of patients with rare chronic diseases in Croatia

Information behavior of patients with rare chronic diseases is a complex phenomenon due to specificities of these diseases. Usually they are rather complex, chronic and degenerative, generally poorly researched and difficult to diagnose, often fatal, their treatment is prolonged, complex and requires the active involvement of patients themselves, and the impact of disease on individuals daily life is multifaceted.

In Croatia there is no formal form of information provision for patients with rare chronic diseases and the associations of patients are extremely rare. Few researchers have dealt with the research of information needs and behavior of people with rare chronic diseases, while in Croatia similar studies have not been conducted.

The research questions that we seek to answer are: What are the information needs of patients with rare chronic diseases? What sources of information they use? What are their information behavior patterns? Is there a correlation between factors such as demographic and socioeconomic characteristics and their information needs and behavior?

The research methodology will be based on Johnsons Comprehensive Model of Information Seeking, model developed by studying information behavior of cancer patients. Methods to be used in the study are semi-structured interviews and surveys.

The expected contribution of this research is critical evaluation of existing theoretical and methodological approaches in studying information behavior of patients with rare chronic diseases, formation of appropriate theoretical and methodological approaches, understanding the information needs and behavior of patients with rare chronic diseases and important factors that influence them, and providing guidance for improving information provision to patients with rare chronic diseases in Croatia.
The support of the university library to students’ learning in the field of humanities and social sciences in the digital environment

There are various types of library users, and they behave differently in interaction with digital resources. Changes in the information environment have influenced the information behavior of students and the way in which they seek, find and use information resources for learning (Prensky, 2001). Preferences of the new generation of students toward e-sources and new technologies affect the way of their reading and learning (Tenopir and Rowlands, 2007; Williams and Rowlands, 2007; Gunter, 2007, Liu, 2006). The question is how learning has changed and whether the library follows the trend of new generations to learn and read differently? What happens to the reading of printed sources that are still important, especially for the humanities? The focus of this research will be on the role of university library in supporting learning of undergraduate students of humanities and social sciences regarding changes in the information environment. Understanding the behavior of students interaction with information sources, traditional and electronic, is of great importance for the development of collections and services of the university library (Liu and Luo, 2011; Saiti and Prokopiadou, 2008). Therefore, this thesis will explore the information behavior of students of social sciences and humanities in the context of learning and support of university library.

The research methodology includes: Focus group - to collect data on patterns of learning, information behavior, attitudes and preferences of students related to the university library resources in learning, library services and user satisfaction, based on which will be develop a questionnaire.

The questionnaire, which will investigate the patterns of learning, information behavior, attitudes and preferences of students related to the university library resources in learning, as well as students’ satisfaction with library services in digital environment.

The research results will contribute to the development of new paradigms on a theoretical level. The practice will serve to create guidelines for university libraries to make their collections and services based on the user needs.
Dejana Golenko
University of Zadar, Postgraduate program Knowledge Society and the Transfer of Information

Intracurricular (Embedded) Model of Information Literacy (IL) approach
at Academic Level in the Field of Law

Information literacy programs at universities all over the world record the big swing, however there are few examples of formal programs that have found their place in routine practice at academic institutions on Croatian universities, especially in the field of law. Aim of this paper is to investigate information behaviour of students and professors in the field of law and to create adequate model of IL for students, particularly law students. Considering the specificity of legal skills, cooperation of teachers and librarians in creating the program is indispensable, so the model will be based on intracurricular model of IL (Candy, Crebert & O’Leary, 1994; Bruce, 2002; Bundy, 2003; Lau, 2006, Andretta, 2004, Lupton & Beljaars, 2009; Callister, 2003; Ryesky, 2007).

Considering the lack of research regarding the phenomena of IL in the field of law in Croatia, it is necessary to examine the existing information behavior of students and teaching staff on law faculties, where the Faculty of Law University of Rijeka will be used as a case study. The research questions arise how law students find information needed for their research and studies? How professors find information needed for their academic and scientific research? What sources they use in finding relevant information? Is there an existing attitude of teaching staff and the institution regarding the IL phenomenon?

In order to choose which IL model is the most suitable for law faculties in Croatia, it is necessary to thoroughly examine the existing situation and the educational role of libraries and explore the real needs of users and their information behavior.

Research will include two parts. In the first part the role and the position of libraries in educational environment will be explored through the context analysis of the curricula and strategic documents of the institutions, namely of Faculty of Law in Rijeka. Second part will focus on information behaviour of students and professors, and it will be conducted using the method of questionnaire. The idea is to give it to fifth year students, divided into two groups (the first group would consist of students who attended the informal IL program, and the second of students who did not). Further method to be used is the method of in-depth interviews, which will be used for getting an overview of faculty staff opinion regarding several issues, such as the very idea and the phenomenon of IL, the notion of information behaviour of themselves and students, and particularly legal IL skills.

Results of conducted research would serve as guidelines for the content, organization and methodology of drafting a suitable IL model. Further objective of this paper is to provide scientific contribution on both theoretical and practical level.

On a theoretical level the aim is to introduce the debates regarding Intracurricular (Embedded) Model of IL in Croatia, develop the suitable models, namely in the field of law and hopefully open the way for further research.

In practical sense model would serve as a theoretical basis for setting the framework for the design of formal program of IL in library practice of Faculty of Law University of Rijeka.