Fall 2011 Comprehensive Exam Questions

Day 1:
1) Library and information services contribute to building information literate communities. Select an information literacy model, such as the Big6, Kuhlthau’s Information Search Process (ISP), or another commonly used model. Provide an overview of the model and explain its contribution to information literacy instruction. For a library or information services setting of your choice, select an important patron group and discuss how you will use the model to design information literacy instruction for this group. Include references to the literature as appropriate.

2) Describe three major components of an information retrieval system, such as collection, interface, indexing, and retrieval algorithms. Discuss the significance of these three components. Compare and contrast their use in a web search engine and a web-based library catalog. Also discuss one important trend or innovation related to one of the three components. Include references to the literature as appropriate.

3) Principles of professional ethics are not uniformly applicable across different types of organizations. For two library or information services settings of your choice (public, academic, school, specialized libraries, archives, museums, etc.) select one principle from the ALA Code of Ethics. Describe a situation in which the principle could be applied differently in the two settings you have selected. Include a justification to explain why the principle is appropriately applied differently. Include references to the literature as appropriate.

4) As sources of information become increasingly available in digital formats, the relationship between information professionals and their users has changed. For a library or information services setting of your choice, discuss in depth two ways in which the shift to digital formats has changed the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed by information professionals in reference and public services. Include references to the literature as appropriate.

5) Identify three important ways information users are changing within our 21st century. For each change you identify, discuss the implications for a library or information services setting of your choice. Include references to the literature as appropriate.
Day 2:
6) Discuss the relative strengths and limitations of free web-based search services (such as Google or Google Scholar) and commercial digital databases (such as Proquest, Wilsonline, Ebsconet, Grolier’s) in terms of their value as tools for research. For a library or information services setting of your choice, provide an in-depth analysis of their different appropriate uses and illustrate your analysis with a scenario. Include references to the literature as appropriate.

7) The value of librarians is often associated with their work to make information more accessible. Yet librarians engage in value-increasing activities that extend beyond our traditional notions of information access. For a library or information services setting of your choice, identify and explain in detail an activity often performed by librarians that adds value, yet is not associated with increasing access to information. Include a discussion of the skill set needed to perform this activity and how it adds value for the information user. Include references to the literature as appropriate.

8) Libraries offering eBooks to their users report success and strong enthusiasm along with frustration and many challenges. Discuss two opportunities or advantages, and two concerns or challenges for libraries offering eBooks. Include a discussion of how you would address these concerns or challenges. Incorporate both hardware-related and content-related factors in your answer. Include references to the literature as appropriate.

9) The knowledge pyramid (also known as the DIKW pyramid) depicts a hierarchical structure of the interdependent concepts of data, information, knowledge and wisdom. Select two of these concepts. Drawing on your experience in the SLIS program, define them. Then compare and contrast them. Finally, for a professional position such as archivist, catalog librarian, reference and instruction librarian, digital curator, school library media specialist, etc., discuss the implications of the two concepts for the position’s responsibilities and activities. Include references to the literature as appropriate.

10) Multi-media resources incorporate different media (such as audio, video, pictorial, graphical and textual) and are important in library collections and on the web. Within the context of a library or information services setting of your choice, describe two benefits and two challenges of providing access to multi-media, as compared with exclusively textual information. In addition, explain how you, as an information professional, would address the two challenges. Include references to the literature as appropriate.