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Statement of Research Interests

I. Primary Area 1: Issues of Quality in Library and Information Provision; the Role of the Library in the 21st Century Academy

My research interests, broadly interpreted, center on concepts of information resource and service quality. Specifically, I am most interested in the ways in which academic libraries serve their patrons and the changing role of the physical library in the 21st Century academy.

There is little doubt that as technology continually increases the ability of the individual to access information from the location of his or her choosing, information seeking becomes a task further removed from the physical presence of the library and its librarians. The information seeking and use behaviors of scholars and their students are not exceptions to this phenomenon; the resources and services provided by academic libraries are in a continual state of flux reflecting the increased capabilities of technology as well as changing patron need and expectation.

I believe that examining this transition will constitute the core of a fruitful research agenda. The phenomena I wish to pursue in my research reflect the tension between excitement over increased opportunity and concern about how to best utilize this increased capacity to provide and access information and services. Because I believe that research should inform both practice and teaching, the projects I tend to be attracted to have a marked practical component, frequently springing directly from my prior professional experience as a librarian, my teaching interests, or both.

II. Primary Area 2: “Use” in LIS; The Dissertation: A Conceptual Analysis of *Use* in the journal literature of Library and Information Science

The question I chose to examine in my dissertation work reflects this marriage of theory and practice. My dissertation examines the ways in which the concept of “use” has developed and been interpreted in the journal literature of library and information science. I believe that concepts develop within a discourse or frame of experience and both reflect and are reflected in the priorities, interests, and concerns of that discourse.

Operationalizations, definitions (and their absences,) and connections between *use* and other LIS-related concepts have a great deal to say about the structure of the discipline(s) of LIS. In short, I have found that while “use” is frequently referred to as a primitive concept needing no further explanation or definition, *use* is, in fact, a multi-dimensional concept with varying meaning depending upon the context in which it’s discussed.

There are several natural points of extension from my dissertation. After learning about the construction of the use concept in the literature, I would like to investigate its relationship to apprehensions of *use* in the applied setting by examining the meaning of *use* for different library and information providers and seekers. In the longer term, I also envision a multi-phase interview/observation/data analysis project of use in several library settings to map the diverse meanings of *use* in different library and information provision contexts.

III. Secondary Area of Interest

Because my dissertation experience has been so exciting, I am interested in pursuing analyses of other concepts of interest to LIS, such as *access*. In spite of the breadth of research traditions in LIS, a truly effective method for concept analysis has yet to be introduced and elucidated in the LIS literature. While working on my dissertation I have investigated concept analysis in

other fields such as political science and most notably, nursing, a discipline whose robust tradition of concept analysis is supported by a well-developed battery of specific methods, some of which could be quite effective in examining LIS concepts.

IV. Research Methodology and Theoretical Framework(s)

I am interested in research methodology as applied in LIS; specifically methods that approach research questions from a structuralist standpoint, such as discourse analysis and phenomenology. Though I would not classify myself as a strict adherent to a particular theoretical perspective, I tend to be attracted to research questions that are best addressed through qualitative methods.

V. Projects in Process

In addition to my dissertation, which I anticipate adapting into research articles for publication, I am working on two other projects. One, currently under peer review, is an article about a series of focus groups a former colleague and I conducted with social sciences doctoral students at the University of Alabama. The focus groups investigated the affective dimensions of research for doctoral students, their research process, and the mentoring in research approaches provided by their faculty mentors. The second project looks into the duties of academic electronic resources librarians and the preparation provided for electronic resources librarianship during MLIS studies. This project is being led by a faculty member from UA's School of Library and Information Studies (Dr. Jeff Weddle) and the University of Alabama's Electronic Resources Librarian (Jill Grogg.) Research related to pedagogical issues in LIS education will likely continue to be a tangential area of my research agenda.