Preface

This scholarly book, *Library and Information Science Research in Asia-Oceania: Theory and Practice*, is an attempt to present and discuss the research status quo and development in the field of Library and Information Science (LIS), both theoretically and practically, in the Asia-Oceania region.

As a discipline, LIS seeks to create and structure a body of scientific knowledge related to the transfer and communication of information. It has both theoretical and practical components. This is the principle that has guided our selection of subject matter for the book and that has shaped our presentation of the chapters. Our title mentions both theory and practice in LIS research. There is a good deal of theoretical discussion embedded in the book. We have also sought to relate theory to empirical studies in the contexts of everyday work, social, life, and learning processes dealing with information, to LIS education in a rapidly changing information environment, and to the practical environment of libraries and information services. We hope that this book can contribute to the development of LIS both as an academic discipline and a professional practice.

The main goal of this book is to bring together theories and practices development, achievements, and challenges in international LIS studies. This book assembles a group of top researchers and active professionals from the major LIS schools in Asia and Oceania to disseminate and discuss the changing nature of the research, the major advances, and practical development in the field. It provides an ideal forum for this international research area, allowing a presentation and comparison of LIS development in Asia-Oceania. For example, the chapters cover a wide array of research themes, ranging from the evolution of LIS research methodology, to the presentation of findings on various research topics such as information experiences, information behaviour, information architecture, information literacy, Web search, scholarly communication, and a new research agenda on mass communication, social informatics, and children’s literature, and to the report of research and educational programs evolution and development on LIS in diverse countries in the region. As such, this book will make a significant contribution to the LIS research literature.

A number of high-quality submissions were received. Of 31 submitted chapter proposals, 15 were accepted for full chapters included in the book (48%). All the submitted full chapters were fully refereed. Each submission received at least two anonymous reviews by independent, qualified experts in the area; several received three reviews. A total of 34 peer reviewers served two rounds of a double-blind review.

Our contributors come from 10 countries and districts (China, Australia, Singapore, United States, New Zealand, Indonesia, Japan, Thailand, Taiwan, and Pakistan). An effort has been made to collect chapters to offer a deep perspective on LIS from a broad array of countries in Asia-Oceania region. However, not every country or aspect of LIS in the region has been represented. Chapter authors include full professors, researchers, and PhD students from universities and academic institutions, as well as practitioners from libraries such as library advisors and academic librarians. For instance, one chapter was written
by two academic librarians in a university library in Indonesia, who are currently pursuing their PhDs in Australia and the United States, respectively. Another two chapters were written by researchers in the United States but their research either focusing on perceptions and viability of launching LIS e-learning programs in Vietnam or providing important implications for researchers in the Asia-Oceania region.

This book represents an intellectual endeavour for the editors. Each of the editors is a researcher and educator in Asia-Oceania region, who has had long experience in research, education, and training in LIS and information management. Both the Information Management Program at the University of South Australia, Australia, and the School of Information Management at Nanjing University, China, are members of the *iSchools* organisation, which is a collective of Information Schools dedicated to advancing the information field in the 21st century.

This book is divided into three sections. Section 1 provides an introduction to the subject matter and the book content. Section 2 includes nine chapters that present the findings from various research projects. Section 3 contains six chapters that deal with LIS research trends and educational programs as well as library practices in diverse countries in the region.

SECTION 1. INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1. Overview of Theory and Practice in Library and Information Science Research in Asia-Oceania

Written by the editors, this chapter provides a concise overview dealing with the theory and practice in Library and Information Science (LIS) research development in Asia-Oceania. It also provides the reader with an overview of what to expect from the individual chapters and from the book as a whole. The field of LIS has experienced significant growth, both in the number of LIS schools and research outputs, in recent years in the region. As a professional field, both theory and practice are viewed as equally important for the development of the LIS discipline. In this book, both theoretical as well as practical work in LIS research in Asia-Oceania region is presented.

SECTION 2. THEORY: LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE RESEARCH IN ASIA-OCEANIA

Chapter 2. Informed Democracy: Information Experiences during the 2012 Queensland Election

In this chapter, Insa Haidn, Helen Partridge, and Christine Yates reported a qualitative study exploring people’s information experiences during the 2012 Queensland State election in Australia. The technique of a semi-structured interview was employed. The findings identified five themes that depict the participants’ information experiences during the election, including information sources, information flow, personal politics, party politics, and sense making. Together, these themes represent what is experienced as information, how information is experienced, as well as contextual aspects that were unique to voting in an election. As the authors point out, the study is one in an emerging area of enquiry that has explored information experience as a research object. In the end, the authors call for further exploration into information experience within different contexts to help develop theoretical understanding of this important and emerging construct.
Chapter 3. Information Organising Behaviours in Everyday Life: An Exploration Using Diaries

Bhuva Narayan in her chapter deals with people’s information organising behaviours in everyday life based on a diary study where participants maintained an information journal. The findings show that information organising behaviours (including the lack of it) in everyday life is a problematic area due to various factors, which include problems with knowledge representation and inter-subjectivity, along with spatiotemporal dimensions that give rise to intra-subjectivity in people’s minds. These factors were deemed to have implications on the findability of information as well as on personal information management.

Chapter 4. Research on Web Search and User Search Behaviors in Mainland China

Recently, there has been a great boom of research on information behaviors, especially Web search behaviors, in Mainland China. In their chapter, Chang Liu, Peng Qu, and Tao Xu reviewed the research on Web search and user search behaviors in Mainland China. Their review finds that there are several well-organized teams of researchers in this field, each focusing on different aspects of users’ behaviors, such as task, user characteristics, mental model, search strategy, and queries and clicks, and there is much collaboration between researchers in China and abroad. Based on the review, the authors also suggest that more research should be conducted on important issues during the complete search process, including information need, search task, and interactions. Besides survey, log mining, experiment methods, and more solid research designs should be taken into consideration in future research.

Chapter 5. Information Architecture: How to Conceptualize It and Implement It

In their chapter on “Information Architecture,” Xiaoying Zhou and Xiumei Zhang give an overview of the origins and evolution of Information Architecture (IA), discuss IA principles, the need to understand IA, the problems that can be solved by IA, and IA in practice. The authors also investigate IA from five aspects, including core concepts, research objects, disciplinary viewpoints, effects, and the human role in IA. In terms of implementing IA, they analyze two guiding theoretic principles and the common process of IA. The tools and methods for measuring IA are also discussed.

Chapter 6. Information Literacy Research: The Evolution of the Relational Approach

Information literacy is believed to be an issue of growing global concern. In this chapter, Lyndelle Gunton, Christine Bruce, and Kate Davis firstly reflect on the relational approach to information literacy, its evolution and development, application in contemporary research, and emerging directions. Then, they present the approach, as introduced by Australian researchers, as an integration of experiential, contextual, and transformational perspectives. Some significant studies that have contributed to the evolution of the approach are also discussed.
Chapter 7. Health Information Literacy and the Experience of 65-79 Year Old Australians

With regard to information literacy in a particular context, Ian Stoodley, Christine Bruce, Helen Partridge, Sylvia Edwards, and Helen Cooper investigate the Health Information Literacy (HIL) experience of 65–79 year old Australians from a relational perspective. A phenomenographic investigation was conducted and the results show five qualitatively distinct ways of experiencing HIL: Absorbing (intuitive reception), Targeting (a planned process), Journeying (a personal quest), Liberating (equipping for independence), and Collaborating (interacting in community). These five ways of experiencing indicate expanding awareness of context (degree of orientation towards their environment), source (breadth of esteemed information), beneficiary (the scope of people who gain), and agency (amount of activity) across HIL core aspects of information, learning, and health. The findings also illustrate the potential contribution of relational information literacy to information science.

Chapter 8. Exploring Workplace Experiences of Information Literacy through Environmental Scanning Process

This chapter, by Xue Zhang, Shaheen Majid, and Schubert Foo, reports on a study aimed to explore workplace experiences of information literacy through an environmental scanning process adopted by the travel industry in Singapore. Based on the survey and interview results, it was found that information literacy skills had a significant impact on the quality of information for decision making. Senior Managers were satisfied with their employees’ overall level of information literacy skills. However, many problems still emerged during the environmental scanning process, such as inability to find the needed information, overreliance on habitual information sources, and improper storage of information.

Chapter 9. Capturing Scholarly Communication in Southeast Asia: A Bibliometric Perspective

This chapter, by Songphan Choemprayong, quantitatively evaluates the publication and citation data to capture the scholarly activities in Southeast Asia from a bibliometrics perspective. The contribution of bibliometrics should not be limited to the understanding of individual involvement in a scholarly community but extended to the management of research programs and science and technology policies. The chapter is fundamentally inspired by this observation and attempts to shed some light on this issue by reviewing a number of evaluative studies of scholarly communication activities in Southeast Asia. It provides a state-of-the-art and overall landscape of scholarly communication in this region as well as discusses some areas for future research development in terms of methodological perspectives and research issues. The findings are significant to assist with the development of appropriate science and scholarship policy recommendations and strategies.

The last chapter in this section, by Hsin-liang Chen and Robin A. Moeller, attempts to understand related societal phenomena in the digital age from an inter-disciplinary perspective. The aim of this chapter is to establish a research framework consisting of mass communication, social informatics, and children’s literature regarding children and their racial perceptions. The uniqueness of this approach is to apply the findings of online readers’ comments on a new story to a particular subject area, children’s literature, in which how societal issues are illustrated in popular books are examined. Within this framework, three research areas, including social awareness through the communication process, social perception through the analysis of social informatics, and social adoption through illustrations in the children’s books, are identified.

SECTION 3. PRACTICE: LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE RESEARCH IN ASIA-OCEANIA

Chapter 11. Trends in LIS Education and Research in Pakistan

Written by Kanwal Ameen and Nosheen Fatima Warraich, this chapter provides an overview of the development of formal Library and Information Science (LIS) education and research programs in Pakistan. It analyzes the trends in scholarly literature publishing while identifying the areas of LIS research addressed by Pakistani authors. It also discusses the challenges faced in LIS education and highlights the milestones of LIS education and research history in the country.

Chapter 12. Perceptions and Viability of Launching LIS eLearning Programs in Developing Countries: A Vietnam Case Study

Sandra Hirsh, Debbie Faires, and Alice Hines reported a case study in this chapter exploring the factors that influence readiness to launch eLearning of a library and information science program in a developing country, with a focus on understanding attitudes toward eLearning and the viability of transitioning to an online delivery model in Vietnam. They performed a technology infrastructure assessment to understand whether changes were needed at Vietnam National University to support eLearning. Five key informant interviews and four focus group sessions with 39 participants were also conducted with faculty, graduate and undergraduate students, members of the professional community, and administrators to understand their usage of technology and their perceptions and attitudes toward eLearning. Study findings suggest the importance of understanding the cultural context and the need for further eLearning research, as well as the steps needed for eLearning readiness and integration.
Chapter 13. LIS Undergraduate Education in New Zealand: Development and Contemporary Issues

This chapter, by Amanda Cossham, Peta Wellstead, and Sarah Welland, reviews and discusses Library and Information Science (LIS) undergraduate education in New Zealand over the past 30 years. It examines contemporary issues facing LIS education in a rapidly changing information environment, affected by a particular historical and social context and changes to the higher education sector nationally and internationally. The identified issues include professionalization, the tension between education and continuing professional development, the difficulty of keeping programs up to date and reflective of industry needs in times of fiscal restraint, and the complexities of the particular student body, as well as changes in the LIS sector more generally. Research needs are also highlighted with regard to how professional associations and LIS educators are addressing these issues through a range of solutions designed to strengthen the library, records, and archives professions.

Chapter 14. What’s Past is Prologue: A 15-Year Review of Digital Archives Program in Taiwan

The chapter by Shu-Jiun Chen gives a comprehensive review of the Digital Archives Program in Taiwan, built on a national scale over the past fifteen years. This chapter specifically investigates the goals and strategies of the program, probing into research and development, important achievements, values, lessons, and challenges in six aspects, including digital contents, digital technology, metadata interoperability, applications, industrialization development, and international cooperation. As claimed by the author, although this national program was officially terminated at the end of 2012, the accumulation of digital contents, core technologies, and digital infrastructure over its lifespan makes it certain that one can look forward to its continuing impact upon open data, digital humanities, and sustainable digital archives.

Chapter 15. Public Library in an Aging Society: Developing Active Library Participation in Japan

In their chapter, Saori Donkai and Chieko Mizoue describe the present conditions of an aging society, with a focus on Japan as a typical example of such a society. In Japan, one in every four individuals is over 65 years of age, and one in eight is over 75 years of age. Further, based on this demographic change to an older population, the authors propose a new library service designed to enhance the lives of elderly citizens. They investigate this new service from the viewpoint of lifelong learning, utilizing the results of recent government surveys and some case studies, such as those done at the Izumo City Hikawa Library and the Akita Prefectural Library in Japan. Although the elderly have been placed within the category of “disabled library patrons,” in recent years, it has become more common to consider the elderly, as a whole, as an individual service category. More attention should be paid to supporting elderly citizens at public libraries and to engaging them in the development and maintenance of their own communities.

This chapter concluding the book, by Safirotu Khoir and Ida Fajar Priyanto, examines a possible role to be played by institutional, corporate, and foundational partnerships in providing additional facilities, resources, and activities within an academic library in Indonesia. Using the “corners” set up in the main library at Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) as a case study, it outlines the contributions made to a vibrant academic institution and its broader community at the regional, national, and international levels through these methods. Understanding how philanthropy, foundations, and corporate social responsibility implemented in a mutual and practical way in an academic institution contributes to a new model of support for the public sector using a partnership scheme that involves the interaction of public, private, and civil sectors.

This book is intended as a useful resource for LIS researchers, scholars, students, professionals, and practitioners. It may also be an appropriate text for courses in LIS. In addition, anyone interested in understanding the LIS field in the Asia-Oceania region will find this book an informative and enlightening read.

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