

IS 566
Environmental Scanning for Information Professionals
Fall 1999, Wednesdays, 9:40-12:25

Instructors

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Temple Court 302

Fall office hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 10-11 and 2-3:30; Wednesdays 8:30-9:30 or by appointment

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Course Description

Principles and practice of environmental scanning; information evaluation and synthesis; role of strategic information in modern organizations.

Course Goals/Objectives

1. To develop an understanding of how external information is used in modern organizations.
2. To explore how managers turn information into knowledge.
3. To identify major sources of information about the environment external to an organization that will help predict trends or assist decision makers within a specific organization.
4. To develop an awareness of how to recognize useful information that will help identify trends and assist decision makers in an organization.
5. To learn the query languages of selected online systems.
6. To develop advanced skills in online search strategy formulation.
7. To learn how to analyze and synthesize information retrieved from disparate sources.

Methodology

A combination of lecture, class discussion, group presentations, and online searching. Students will learn to search several online systems through a series of exercises and will also be expected to spend additional time searching online systems. Interpretation and analysis of issues and trends derived from the information retrieved will be demonstrated by students in a comprehensive written and oral report for an agency. An environmental scanning project, online searching, class participation, and exams are required.

Course Assignments

For the final Environmental Scanning Project and lab assignments students will work in small groups. Grades on group projects will be given to the group, although the instructors reserve the right to give separate grades if the workload is not shared equitably.

1) Environmental Scanning Project:

Your final project will be to conduct an environmental scan using appropriate resources from each of the commercial online systems covered in class, the web, and any other appropriate print or online resources. Review the materials retrieved, extract what you think are important trends, and write an analysis/final report. Groups will be formed early in the semester and an organization selected by September 15. Students will need to begin to familiarize themselves with the characteristics of the type of business as soon as they make this selection. Many of the lab assignments will incorporate environmental scanning techniques. Further details will be given in class.

DUE DATE: December 8, 30%

2) Each group will present their research project in a formal presentation. (You may invite representatives from your agency to attend.) Presentations will be strictly limited to 30 minutes. Audiovisual aids or handouts should be used as appropriate. The contribution of each team member must be evident.

DUE DATE: Presentations will be scheduled December 1 and December 8; 10%

3) A mid-term examination will cover readings and material covered in class to date.

DATE: October 13; 20%

4) The final exam will cover readings and material covered in class from the mid-term until the last class session.

DATE: Wednesday, December 15, 9:40-12:25; 20%

5) Online search exercises will be due on the ten dates indicated in the course calendar. Each online exercise will be done in teams of 2-3. If a research project group has more than 3 members, they should split into teams of 2 or 3 people for the online search exercises. Each team will turn in an edited printout for each exercise, annotated with comments and answers to questions as described in the exercise. Exercises will not cover every feature of a system. They will reinforce some of the basics for each system and will illustrate some special features that relate to the class topic of the week. Many exercises will require you to search on more than one online system and to locate comparable Internet resources. Unlike the IS530 Lab Workbook, the exercises will not substitute for reading system documentation and other materials supplied by the online vendor. Studying system documentation on each system's web page and materials passed out in class, plus additional online practice on your own is assumed.

DUE each week as assigned; 20%

Textbooks

Chun Wei Choo, **Information Management for the Intelligent Organization: The Art of Scanning the Environment**. ASIS Monograph Series. 2nd. Edition. Medford, NJ: Information Today, Inc., 1998.

Mary Ellen Bates, **The Online Deskbook**. Wilton, CT: Pemberton Press, 1996.

IS566--Coursepack at Graphic Creations.

Additional Readings

Some additional books and book chapters are in the library reserve room. In addition, you will be given materials in class from each system vendor that will supplement the documentation found in the Temple Court lab and/or found on each system's web page. Many more search tips and techniques can be found regularly in issues of *Online*, *E-Content* (formerly *Database*), *Information Today* and *Searcher* magazines. In addition to print, you can access web versions of *Online* and *E-Content* at <http://www.onlineinc.com> and *Searcher* and *Information Today* at <http://www.infotoday.com> and in ASCII full text on NEXIS and in DIALOG's file 148, Trade & Industry Database.

Course Schedule

SESSION 1: August 25

Topics:

Introduction
What is environmental scanning?
What is issues management?

Online System:

Lexis-Nexis

Readings:

Choo, Chapter 4, first half (pages 71-82)

Robert L. Heath, "A Foundation of Community: Issues Management As an Organizational and Academic Discipline," pp. 1-37 in: **Strategic Issues Management**. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1997.

SESSION 2: September 1

Topic/Online System:

Lexis-Nexis training by Lexis-Nexis representative

Readings:

Bates, "LEXIS-NEXIS"

SESSION 3: September 8

Topics:

Overview of online sources, systems, and services
External vs. internal sources of information
The Oil spot model

Online System:

Lexis-Nexis

Readings:

Bates, "Foreword" and "Introduction"

William L. Renfro, Chapter 5: "Key Stages of The Issues Management Process," pp.

67-92, in: **Issues Management in Strategic Planning**. Westport, CT: Quorum Books, 1993.

Due:

Lab #1

SESSION 4: September 15

Topics:

The Intelligent Organization
Groups formed for final research project

Online System:

LEXIS/NEXIS

Readings:

Choo, Chapter 1

Renfro, Chapter 1: "Issues Management: the Need," pp. 5-24.

Due:

Lab #2

SESSION 5: September 22

Topics:

Understanding information needs
Understanding information use
Groups select type of organization for final project

Online Systems:

LEXIS/NEXIS and DIALOG

Readings:

Choo, Chapter 2

Bates, "DIALOG"

Renfro, Chapter 3: "The Link to Strategic Planning," pp 57-61.

Due:

Groups turn in the name of their organization

SESSION 6: September 29

Topics:

Understanding information needs and use (continued)

Online System:

DIALOG

Readings:

Sugar, William. "User-Centered perspective of Information Retrieval Research and Analysis Methods." In: Martha E. Williams, ed. Annual Review of Information Science and Technology. Vol. 30, pg. 77-109. Published for the American Society of Information Science by Learned Information, Inc., 1995.

Allen, Bryce L. "Cognitive Research in Information Science," In: Martha E. Williams, ed. Annual Review of Information Science and Technology. Vol. 26, pg. 3-37. Published for the American Society of Information Science by Learned Information, Inc., 1991.

Renfro, Chapter 6: "Purposes and Missions," pp. 93-100.

Due:

Lab #3

SESSION 7: October 6

Topics:

Managers as information users
How managers use information

Online System:

DIALOG

Readings:

Choo, Chapter 3.

Renfro, Chapter 7, "Building an Issues Management Function: First Steps," pp. 103-120.

Katzer, Jeffrey and Patricia Fletcher. "The Information Environment of Managers," In: Martha E. Williams, ed. Annual Review of Information Science and Technology. Vol. 27, pg. 227-263. Published for the American Society of

Information Science by Learned Information, Inc., 1992.

"Extroverts or Introverts II: A Litmus Test for Strategic Planners." The Futures Group, Inc., August 1998. http://www.tfg.com/pubs/extroverts_ii.html

Due:

Lab #4

SESSION 8: October 13

MID-TERM EXAMINATION

SESSION 9: October 20

Topics:

Dow Jones Interactive training by Dow Jones representative

Online System:

Dow Jones Interactive

Readings:

Bates, "Dow Jones News/Retrieval" (note: the old name)

Due:

Lab #5

SESSION 10: October 27

Topics:

Environmental Scanning and issues management applied

Online System:

Dow Jones Interactive

Readings:

Choo, Chapter 4, pp. 82-104

Heath, Chapter 2

Due:

Preliminary rough draft of project

SESSION 11: November 3

Topics:

Environmental Scanning Applications

Online System:

Dow Jones Interactive

Readings:

Choo, Chapter 5

Culbertson, Hugh M., et al. **Social, Political and Economic Contexts in Public Relations: Theory and Cases.** Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1993.

Select one of the following cases to read for class discussion:

Chapter 7, "Police in America: Catching Bad Guys and Doing Much, Much More," pp. 123-151.

Chapter 12, "David and Goliath Coexist: The Story of Osteopathic Public Relations," pp. 227-269.

Due:

Lab #6

SESSION 12: November 10

Topics:

Selecting Sources
Introduction to DataStar

Online System:

DataStar

Readings:

Choo, Chapter 6

Kight, Leila K. "How to Predict Companies' Future Actions--A Three-Part Series," **Bulletin of the American Society for Information Science** 23 (October/November 1996): 14-21.

Bates, "Choosing the Right Database" and "DataStar"

Due:

Lab #7

SESSION 13: November 17

Topics:

Selecting online systems

Online System:

DataStar

Readings:

Choo, Chapter 7

Bates, "Getting the Most From Your Search Dollar."

Tenopir, Carol and Katie Hover. "When is the Same Database Not the Same? Database Differences Among Systems," Online 17 (July 1993): 20-27.

Due:

Lab #8

SESSION 14: November 24**Topics:**

The intelligent organization

Online System:

Internet and the World Wide Web

Readings:

Choo, Chapter 8

Bates, "Internet"

Due:

Lab #9

SESSION 15: December 1**Topics:**

Wrap-up, future, and course evaluations

Online System:

others

Readings:

Bates, "Where to Get More Information"

Due:

Lab #10

Group reports if class size is large

SESSION 16: December 8

Topics and Due:

PROJECT DUE

Group reports

FINAL EXAM DATE/TIME: Wednesday December 15, 9:40-12:25pm

Evaluation Summary

Research Project, 30%

Midterm Exam, 20%

Presentation, 10%

Laboratories, 20%

Final Exam, 20%

Environmental Scanning Final Project

From the Syllabus:

Each group will select an organization and a topic of interest to that organization for the major environmental scanning project in this class. You may select one of the organizations/topics listed here or locate a different organization/topic of interest to the group. The group must check with Dr. Tenopir and Dr. Aversa by the end of class on September 15th to get approval of the organization and topic, whether you select one of the following or add a new one. Class time will be allocated for this purpose, but your group should discuss your interests before then. Do not contact the organizations until you check with Drs. Tenopir and Aversa.

Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Tennessee:

- **"Health Issues to Finish out the '90s"
- **"Managed Care Issues"
- **"Women's Health Issues"

Eastman Chemical

- **"Chemical Industry Issues for the 21st Century in":
(choose one):
 - the U.S.
 - Europe
 - Latin America

Oak Ridge National Laboratory Library

- **"The future of libraries in government agencies"
- **"Cost recovery for libraries within organizations"

National Wildlife Federation and the Nature Conservancy

- **"Biodiversity Preservation: Issues and Opportunities"
- **"Conservation Attitudes"

Your final project will be to conduct an environmental scan using appropriate resources from each of the online systems covered in class, the web, and any other appropriate print or online resources. Review the materials retrieved, extract what you think are important trends, and write an analysis/final report ("issues brief"). Groups will be formed early in the semester and a type of organization selected by September 15th. Students will need to begin to familiarize themselves with the characteristics of the type of business as soon as they make this selection. Many of the lab assignments will incorporate environmental scanning techniques.

Steps:

- Identify organization and topic.
- Do background reading on the organization, the type of organization, and the topic.
- Talk to people in the organization about their perceptions of the topic.
- Devise approach to searches (what topics should be searched, what resources should be searched, etc.)
- Allocate online and print searches to group members and devise online strategies.
- Conduct searches and judge relevance.
- Read retrieved material and highlight issues.
- Group and discuss issues and agree on important issues.
- Do additional searches of print and online materials as needed.
- Integrate material from all searches.
- Write rough draft.
- Revise as necessary.
- Write final report.
- Present report to organization and class.

Outline of Report:

- I. Define and Explain the Issue(s)
 - A. Background and current status of the issue(s)
 - B. The nature of the impact of the issue(s)
 - C. The timeframe during which the issue(s) will have an impact.
- II. Define Major Stakeholders
 - A. Which groups the issue(s) will impact and why
 - B. Categorize the position toward the issue(s) that each group has taken or is likely to take

- III. Position Development
 - A. Define and list all position options.
 - B. Recommend a position to the organization

- IV. Appendix
 - A. List all external resources used to research this topic
 - B. List all internal resources used to research this topic

Important Dates:

September 8: Small groups formed. Arrange to talk about common subject interests and possible organizations/topics for your project before next week.

September 15: Decide organization for project (this can be changed if necessary. Talk to instructors about your organization/topic. Obtain approval from Dr. Tenopir.

October 27: Preliminary rough draft due, so instructors can give you feedback.

December 8: All written projects due.

December 1 or 8: Your oral presentation of the group report will be on one of these days.