

## Welcome to INFO 520



**Dan Dorner**

Welcome to INFO 520, Information and Society. This course examines the social, political and economic forces that combine to create today's dynamic information environment. As a foundation, information managers, must be cognisant of a diverse range of concepts, issues, policies and legislation relating to the production, dissemination, and use of information in all aspects of society, including both the workplace and the home. This course aims to provide you with that foundation.

This may be the first course, or one of the first courses, you are studying in the Master of Library and Information Studies programme, or in the Postgraduate Certificate or Diploma in Archives and Records Management (Cert/Dip ArcRec), so you may be feeling a little nervous about what lies ahead, and concerned about what is expected of you. All of the SIM faculty members will have gone through the same gamut of emotions when we first started our postgraduate studies, so we can sympathise.

My name is Dan Dorner and I am the Coordinator of INFO 520. My background is in librarianship and I have worked in a range of positions in public, academic and national libraries in both New Zealand and Canada. I have also taught in professional programmes in both countries, and completed a PhD at the University of Western Ontario on the information policy development process. I have also taught many times in professional development workshops in locations such as Vietnam and Thailand. My experience and studies, and indeed my current role as an academic, have made me think carefully about the nature and value of information, the users (and non-users) of information, the enablers and barriers, and the part that information plays in our society.

INFO 520 is a fascinating course, both for teachers and students, because it goes right to the fundamentals of our discipline. Information is created for people in a social context and goes through a cycle of dissemination and use in which history, economy, and politics all play a part. It is important that everybody involved with information

management should have a good understanding of the raw material with which we work. This understanding goes beyond merely discussing the merits of various books and websites, to analysing the very nature of information and how it is communicated.

The impacts of the rapid advances in information and communication technologies on culture, economics and politics within our society means that for the information management professions there never has been a more interesting time than *now*! We need to re-examine basic questions related to what we do. What is information? Who uses it? What are the issues that arise in providing access to it? What social changes result from its presence or absence? What are our roles as librarians, archivists and record managers in information services? What can we do to improve the effectiveness of the information services we provide? What can we do to influence the impacts of technology on information, and society's access to it?

These questions need to be asked, and you should ask them while studying INFO 520. Of course, you will not be able to study all of the concepts in great depth, for we touch on some huge subjects that can't be dealt with comprehensively in anything less than a full degree. What I ask of you is that you set aside all prejudices and start afresh at this point. The most important thing of all is that you *think* while studying INFO 520 and that you *contribute your point of view* to the weekly discussions. The success of this course will depend largely on your participation. If you wish to talk about particular aspects of the course, you can contact me as follows:

- Email:** **Dan.Dorner@vuw.ac.nz**
- Telephone:** (04) 463 5781 (for calls within the Wellington free calling area).  
Alternatively, call the Administration Office on (04) 463 5103.
- Room:** EA 213, Easterfield Building, southwest end of the second floor. If I'm not in my room, send an email message, leave a note, or a phone message to arrange a time to see me.
- Freephone:** 0800 11 62 99 (for open learning students or internal students calling from outside Wellington). Either you will be put straight through to me, or our Administrative staff will relay a message.
- Fax:** (04) 463 5446

During teaching time, I endeavour to respond to phone messages, email, or faxes within one working day.

If you wish to send something to me by **post**, my address is:

**Dr. Dan Dorner**

School of Information Management  
Victoria University of Wellington  
PO Box 600, Wellington

Assignments should *not* be sent to this address; see the details under 'Assessment' below. Non-assignment material being delivered by courier or in person should go to the SIM Administration Office, EA 121, Easterfield Building, Kelburn Campus, Victoria University of Wellington.

If I am unavailable when you phone, please leave a message with the Administration Office on (04) 463 5103, or 0800 11 62 99.

## *Course materials*

The course material for INFO 520 includes: this course information section (in which the contents of the INFO 520 course are discussed along with course-specific administrative information and Internet conference or internal session details); and a CD-ROM containing readings and course notes associated with each of the 12 modules.

The readings are augmented with material on the Blackboard website for INFO 520, available at

<http://blackboard.vuw.ac.nz>

See 'Online information' for more on this.

### **Using or quoting course notes**

The course notes used in the LIM programmes have been developed over a period of time. As a result, they are likely to include new material contributed by the coordinator and staff involved in the current offering of the course, as well as material contributed by staff involved in earlier offerings. Every effort has been made by our academic and editorial staff to ensure that all material is correctly attributed and complies with the University's copyright license obligations.

If quoting or referring to material written for this course, you should treat it as being contributed anonymously rather than being attributable to the person delivering the particular module in which it appears, unless the authorship is clearly indicated.

## *Course description*

INFO 520, Information and Society, deals with theories used to delineate the relationships between data, information, and knowledge, theories of communication, the role of libraries, archives and records management operations as stores of printed material, and their emerging roles in the electronic era. The course continues with a consideration of the ways in which various groups in society are dealing with information, including the economics of information, the development of national and international plans and policies, and legal issues concerned with copyright and intellectual property rights. The course also considers wider public policy issues related to censorship, freedom of access to government information, and privacy. It concludes with a consideration of issues of professionalism, and the future role of librarians and information specialists in a rapidly changing environment.

Remember that this course deals with concepts and ideas. Some of these are drawn from the social sciences, philosophy, history and philosophy of science, economics, law, and many other areas that may be new to you. Do not be concerned if some of the ideas, theories, and concepts are difficult to understand. Some of the issues we deal with are indeed extremely complex and may represent idiosyncratic points of view that, although they are of interest to some of us, may not always commend themselves to our particular orientation and way of thinking. You should aim for a relatively deep understanding of some of the ideas and issues — particularly those that attract you — rather than a superficial overview of all the issues that are introduced in the weekly discussions, tutorials, and readings.

In assessing your written work, I shall look particularly for an understanding of the issues and concepts that you would like to raise, rather than for a superficial breadth of knowledge. If there are concepts, issues, and theories that you do not understand (or indeed, ones that you do not like), then say so, and give your reasons.

This issues discussed in this course also provide rich territory for possible topics for your INFO 580 research project. It is always worth noting down references to books or journal articles about political, social, or economic issues relevant to specific aspects of information management that you find particularly interesting — because they may contain the seeds for an INFO 580 research project.

During the second half of the course, I will want you to identify researchable issues covered in the readings and the weekly discussions so that we can spend 5 to 10

minutes in each class talking about why these issues would (or would not) be good for developing an INFO 580 project.

## *Learning objectives*

By the end of the INFO 520 course, students should be able to:

1. Describe how librarianship, information science, archival science, and records management have developed as professions; in particular, the goals, characteristics, and functions shared by these information professions.
2. Describe key theories, such as the information life cycle and the information continuum, that are used to model the communication and flow of information for the purpose of information management.
3. Evaluate current government information infrastructure policy in New Zealand, and compare and contrast policies developed and operated in New Zealand with those in other countries.
4. Discuss the issues and trends that are most likely to impact upon the future role of information professionals.
5. Assess the impact that information has upon scientific research and development.
6. Critically evaluate government policy on issues related to the individual's rights to intellectual property, censorship, access to government information and privacy.
7. Understand the importance of research to the information professions, and think critically about researchable aspects of issues that are important to information professionals.

## *Time commitment*

You should aim to spend between ten and twelve hours per week on INFO 520. This time includes attendance at the weekly session.

## *Course schedule*

INFO 520 will be held in the first trimester (March-June) of the 2006 academic year. There will be no sessions for two weeks during the mid-trimester break (8-23 April 2006).

- **Internal students**  
There will be a seminar on Tuesdays (from 10.00-11.50 a.m.) in the Easterfield Lecture Theatre, LT 206.
- **Open learning students**  
The weekly conference sessions will be held on Tuesdays from 5.00-6.30 p.m.
- **Open learning students (within Auckland)**  
Sessions for Auckland students will be delivered by a mixture of audioconferencing and face-to-face teaching. Auckland students should refer to the separate 'Auckland mode' timetable for details.

## Schedule

Week	Dates	Topic
1	6-10 March	The Information Society
2	13-17 March	The nature of knowledge and information
3	20-24 March	Communication and information management
4	27-31 March	Social information
5	3-7 April	Scholarly communication
6	24-28 April	Economic aspects of information
7	1-5 May	Information policy
8	8-12 May	Freedom of information
9	15-19 May	Protection of personal privacy
10	22-26 May	Intellectual property
11	29 May-2 June	Censorship
12	5-9 June	Ethics of information professionals; the future of the information professions

### **Seminar, Internet and audioconference participation**

Please prepare your work before the session for which it is required. Advance preparation is required to assist critical thinking, analytical skills, and deep understanding of the material. As the sessions are meant to be interactive, you should be prepared to answer questions, contribute comments, and ask for clarification of issues pertaining to the material under discussion. In some sessions you may be asked to talk about a specific topic, or to share your experience in exploring the resources we are discussing with the rest of your seminar group. You should always be prepared for this.

## Assessment

None of the LIM courses has a final examination. This course will be internally assessed, and there will therefore be two assignments due during the trimester.

### Assignments

There are two assignments for this course:

Assignment	Date due	Value	Length
1. Essay	26 April, 5 p.m.	50%	2200 words max.
2. Report	6 June, 5 p.m.	50%	2200 words max.

### Late assignments

Assignments that are not received by the due date will receive a 10% penalty up to one week after the due date. Assignments will not be accepted after this date unless an exemption has been granted by the course coordinator. Exemptions are only granted in the case of severe illness or bereavement.

### Word count

All work submitted MUST contain a word count, easily available from your word-processing program, and will include endnotes and footnotes. Bibliographic references are not counted. The word count should appear under your name. (**Note:** your name should appear only on the back of the last page of the assignment.) The penalty for not including your word count or going over the word count will be 5%.

### Presentation

Details of the LIM Group's assignment policy, including presentation, will be found in the *Administration Handbook*.

### Plagiarism

You should read and take heed of the statement on collaboration and plagiarism in the "General University information" section; you *must* acknowledge all sources you use. You are expected to present information in your own words, based on your understanding of the background material you read. ***Any assignment which is extensively plagiarised will receive an automatic fail grade.***



**Submission**

Remember to keep a copy of each assignment you send us, just in case the original goes astray. Assignments should be submitted as follows:

**Open learning students:**

- **Post:** To LIM O.L.—INFO 520, School of Information Management, Victoria University of Wellington, PO Box 600, Wellington.
- **Courier:** To LIM O.L.—INFO 520, Room EA121, Easterfield Building, Kelburn Campus, Victoria University of Wellington.

**Internal students:**

- **Post:** To LIM INTERNAL—INFO 520, School of Information Management, Victoria University of Wellington, PO Box 600, Wellington.
- **Deliver:** To the LIM Assignment Box, 1st floor, Easterfield Building. This box is cleared as soon as the Administration Office opens on the morning following the due date. Any late assignments should be delivered to the following address:
- **Courier or late delivery:** To LIM INTERNAL—INFO 520, Room EA121, Easterfield Building, Kelburn Campus, Victoria University of Wellington.

## *Online information*

In addition to the course material on CD-ROM, you will be required to use the resources for this course which are available in the School's Blackboard online learning environment:

<http://blackboard.vuw.ac.nz/>

The Blackboard environment will contain a Web-based forum for discussion of issues related to the course, links to sites of interest, additional readings and information, updates, etc. You should read the appropriate module web pages in conjunction with the module readings and course notes.

Details on how to access Blackboard are in the *Administration Handbook*, but if you have any difficulties logging on please contact the Help Desk, at:

[scs-help@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:scs-help@vuw.ac.nz)

All LIM students will be automatically enrolled in LIM Programmes Information on Blackboard. General announcements and information will be posted here, and students should check this site regularly.

### **Internet conferencing**

Distance sessions are now being conducted via the Internet using the Chatterbox application; in order to participate students will need an Internet-connected PC running Windows XP or Windows 2000, microphone, and headphones/speakers. To connect, go to the Internet conferencing page (and read the “Getting Started” information) at

<http://www.sim.vuw.ac.nz/conferencing/>

There is also an ‘Internet Conferencing’ button linking to this page in Blackboard.

*Some days before your first session, and at least 15 minutes before each subsequent session, you should test your system by going to the Echo Room.* Regular classes will be held in the LIS Room; additional Discussion Rooms are available for breakout groups, and as a “waiting room” if a class is proceeding in the main LIS room. Study groups can use the discussion rooms out of regular class times.

For further information, follow the help links on the Internet Conferencing page; details, including screen name conventions, are also available on Blackboard under LIM Programmes Information.

### **LIM Students email list**

Mass communication between the school and students is via the email list. It is your responsibility to ensure you are on the email list; subscription is essential.

To subscribe: send an email to

`lim_students-subscribe@vuw.ac.nz`

To unsubscribe: send an email to

`lim_students-off@vuw.ac.nz`

No text in the body or subject line is required. You will be sent a confirmation email, and must confirm the operation by clicking reply and send. You will then receive a welcome or goodbye email.

## *General University information*

Students should familiarise themselves with the University's policies and statutes, particularly those regarding assessment and course of study requirements, and formal academic grievance procedures.

### **Faculty of Commerce and Administration offices**

**Railway West Wing (RWW) FCA Student Administration Office:** The Student Administration Office is located on the ground and first floors of the Railway West Wing. The ground floor counter is the first point of contact for general enquiries and FCA forms. Student Administration Advisers are available to discuss course status and give further advice about FCA qualifications. To check for opening hours, call the office on (04) 463 5376.

**Easterfield (EA) FCA/Law Kelburn Office:** the Kelburn Campus Office for the Faculties of Commerce & Administration and Law is situated in the Easterfield Building and includes the ground floor reception desk (EA005), and offices 125a to 131 (Level 1). The office is available for the following:

- Duty tutors for student contact and advice.
- Information concerning administrative and academic matters.
- FCA Student Administration forms (e.g. application for academic transcripts, requests for degree audit, COP requests).
- Examinations-related information during the examination period.

Check with the Student Administration Office for opening times: (04) 463 5376.

### **General University Policies and Statutes**

Students should familiarise themselves with the University's policies and statutes, particularly those regarding assessment and course of study requirements, and formal academic grievance procedures.

### **Student conduct and staff conduct**

The Statute on Student Conduct together with the Policy on Staff Conduct ensure that members of the University community are able to work, learn, study and participate in the academic and social aspects of the University's life in an atmosphere of safety and respect. The Statute on Student Conduct contains information on what conduct is

prohibited and what steps can be taken if there is a complaint. For queries about complaint procedures under the Statute on Student Conduct, contact the Facilitator and Disputes Advisor.

This Statute is available in the Faculty Student Administration Office, or at

<http://www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/StudentConduct>

The policy on Staff Conduct can be found on the VUW website at

<http://www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/StaffConduct>

### **Academic grievances**

If you have any academic problems with your paper you should talk to the tutor or lecturer concerned or, if you are not satisfied with the result of that meeting, see the LIM Programme Director (Tony Hooper, [tony.hooper@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:tony.hooper@vuw.ac.nz)) or the Head of School (Sid Huff, [sid.huff@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:sid.huff@vuw.ac.nz)). If, after trying the above channels, you are still unsatisfied, formal grievance procedures can be invoked. These are set out in the Academic Grievances Policy which is published on the VUW website, at

<http://www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/AcademicGrievances>

### **Academic integrity and plagiarism**

Academic integrity is about honesty — put simply, it means **no cheating**. All members of the University community are responsible for upholding academic integrity, which means staff and students are expected to behave honestly, fairly and with respect for others at all times.

Plagiarism is a form of cheating which undermines academic integrity, and is **prohibited** at Victoria. The University defines plagiarism as follows:

Plagiarism is presenting someone else's work as if it were your own, whether you mean to or not.

'Someone else's work' means *anything* that is not your own idea, even if it is presented in your own style. It includes material from books, journals or any other printed source, the work of other students or staff, information from the Internet, software programmes and other electronic material, designs and ideas. It also includes the organisation or structuring of any such material.

***Plagiarism is not worth the risk.*** Any enrolled student found guilty of plagiarism will be subject to disciplinary procedures under the Statute on Student Conduct (see above)

and may be penalised severely. Consequences of being found guilty of plagiarism can include:

- an oral or written warning;
- suspension from class or university;
- cancellation of your mark for an assessment or a fail grade for the course.

Find out more about plagiarism, and how to avoid it, on the University's website, at <http://www.vuw.ac.nz/home/studying/plagiarism.html>

### **Students with disabilities**

The University has a policy of reasonable accommodation of the needs of students with disabilities. The policy aims to give students with disabilities an equal opportunity with all other students to demonstrate their abilities. If you have a disability, impairment, or chronic medical condition (temporary, permanent, or recurring) that may impact on your ability to participate, learn, and/or achieve in lectures and tutorials or in meeting the course requirements, then please contact the Course Coordinator as early in the course as possible.

Alternatively you may wish to approach a Student Adviser from Disability Support Services to confidentially discuss your individual needs, and the options and support that are available. Disability Support Services are located on Level 1, Robert Stout Building, or phoning 463-6070, email: [disability@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:disability@vuw.ac.nz). The name of your School's Disability Liaison Person can be obtained from the Administrative Assistant or the School Prospectus.

### **Student support**

Staff at Victoria want students' learning experiences at the University to be positive. If your academic progress is causing you concern, please contact the relevant Course Coordinator, or Associate Dean, who will either help you directly or put you in contact with someone who can.

The Student Services Group is also available to provide a variety of support and services. Find out more at

[http://www.vuw.ac.nz/st\\_services/](http://www.vuw.ac.nz/st_services/)

or email

[student-services@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:student-services@vuw.ac.nz)

VUWSA employs two Education Coordinators who deal with academic problems and provide support, advice and advocacy services, as well as organising class representatives and faculty delegates. The Education Office is located on the ground floor, Student Union Building, phone 463 6983 or 463 6984, email [education@vuwsa.org.nz](mailto:education@vuwsa.org.nz).

### **Manaaki Pihipihinga Māori and Pacific Mentoring programme**

VUW offers academic mentoring for Māori and Pacific students studying at all levels in the Faculties of Humanities & Social Sciences, and Commerce & Administration, with weekly sessions for an hour with a mentor to go over assignments and any questions from tutorials or lectures. Registered students can use the facilities study rooms and computer suite, at any time, at Kelburn and Pipitea. There is also a mature student and post-graduate network. A mentoring room will also be running at Pipitea Campus starting January. For further information, please contact:

Melissa Dunlop

Programme Coordinator

Room 109 D

14 Kelburn Parade (back courtyard)

Ph: (04) 463 6015; email: [Maori-Pacific-Mentoring@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:Maori-Pacific-Mentoring@vuw.ac.nz)