

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON
Te Whare Wānanga o te Ūpoko o te Ika a Māui



School of Information Management

INFO 520: INFORMATION AND SOCIETY

Trimester One 2007



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.

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 students calling from outside Wellington; ask to be transferred, or dial 5781 at the recorded message to talk to Dan).
Alternatively, the SIM Administrator can 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.

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 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, completing a PhD at the University of Western Ontario on the information policy development process, and taught 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.

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); a CD-ROM containing readings and course notes associated with each of the 12 modules; plus a DVD recording of *The World Uncovered: Digital Dividend*. This material is augmented by the Blackboard website for INFO 520, available at

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

See 'Online information' for more on this.

Learning outcomes are specified for each study module. Students should note that some modules include exercises and discussion points; it is important that you complete or prepare these before the weekly session. 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.

The study notes for each module include a section giving work to prepare for the weekly session. **You should make sure that you complete the work listed in this section, including all the practical exercises, before the weekly session for that module.** Reading '[material] to prepare for the weekly session' **before** starting work on the module will help you to use your study time effectively.

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.

Learning objectives

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

1. Identify and assess the key social, economic and political issues and trends that impact upon information in modern society with special reference to New Zealand and its people.
2. Discuss the role played by information organisations such as libraries and archives in the provision of access to information to specific client groups.
3. 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.
4. Explain the process through which information policies are defined.
5. Critically evaluate government policy in New Zealand on issues related to the individual's rights with respect to access to government information, to personal privacy, to intellectual property, and to intellectual freedom.

6. 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.
7. Understand the importance of research to the information professions, and think critically about researchable issues that are important to information professionals.

Time commitment

To achieve satisfactory grades, you should expect to spend around twelve hours per week on INFO 520 (including time spent in the weekly session). Up to two hours per week will be spent in the weekly session. The balance of your time should be spent reading the material in the CD-ROM, on Blackboard and on the Internet, and doing your preparation work for the weekly session and assignments.

Course schedule

INFO 520 will be held in the first trimester (February-June) of the 2007 academic year. There will be no sessions for two weeks during the mid-trimester break (9-20 April).

- **Internal students**

There will be a seminar on Mondays (from 9.00-10.50 a.m.) in the Cotton Building, CO 228.

- **Open learning students**

The weekly conference sessions will be held on Mondays 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	Starting	Topic
1	26 February	The Information Society
2	5 March	The nature of knowledge and information
3	12 March	Communication and information management
4	19 March	Social information
5	26 March	Scholarly communication
6	2 April	Economic aspects of information
Mid-term break		
7	23 April	Information policy
8	30 April	Freedom of information
9	7 May	Protection of personal privacy
10	14 May	Intellectual property
11	21 May	Censorship
12	28 May	Ethics of information professionals; the future of the information professions

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.

Assignment	Date due	Value	Length
1. Essay	23 April 2007	50%	2200 words max.
2. Report	5 June 2007	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 Web-based learning environment will be used to post course information notices, and enable ongoing electronic discussion forums on topics or issues introduced in or out of class. Students are also encouraged to use Blackboard for information sharing, and to post questions for electronic and in-class discussion. You should also 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:

its-service@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

<https://conferencing.sim.vuw.ac.nz/>

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-unsubscribe@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

Faculty of Commerce and Administration Offices

Railway West Wing (RWW) - FCA Student and Academic Services Office

The Faculty's Student and Academic Services 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 Student and Academic Services Office on (04) 463 5376.

Easterfield (EA) - FCA/Education/Law Kelburn Office

The Kelburn Campus Office for the Faculties of Commerce and Administration, Education and Law is situated in the Easterfield Building - it 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.
- Forms for FCA Student and Academic Services (e.g. application for academic transcripts, requests for degree audit, COP requests).
- Examinations-related information during the examination period.

To check for opening hours call the Student and Academic Services Office on (04) 463 5376.

General University Policies and Statutes

Students should familiarise themselves with the University's policies and statutes, particularly the Assessment Statute, the Personal Courses of Study Statute, the Statute on Student Conduct and any statutes relating to the particular qualifications being studied; see the Victoria University Calendar or go to <http://www.vuw.ac.nz/policy>.

For information on the following topics, go to the Faculty's website -- <http://www.vuw.ac.nz/fca> -- under Important Information for Students:

- Academic Grievances
- Academic Integrity and Plagiarism
- Student and Staff Conduct

- Meeting the Needs of Students with Impairments
- Student Support

Manaaki Pihipihinga Programme

Manaaki Pihipihinga is an academic mentoring programme for undergraduate Māori and Pacific students in the Faculties of Commerce and Administration, and Humanities and Social Sciences. Sessions are held at the Kelburn and Pipitea Campuses in the Mentoring Rooms, 14 Kelburn Parade (back courtyard), Room 109D, and Room 210, Level 2, Railway West Wing. There is also a Pacific Support Coordinator who assists Pacific students by linking them to the services and support they need while studying at Victoria. Another feature of the programme is a support network for Postgraduate students with links to Postgraduate workshops and activities around Campus.

For further information, or to register with the programme, email manaaki-pihipihinga-programme@vuw.ac.nz or phone (04) 463 5233 ext. 8977. To contact the Pacific Support Coordinator, email pacific-support-coord@vuw.ac.nz or phone (04) 463 5842.