Information use in context

Title of the Module
Information use in context

Level
Master Degree in Information Science and Cultural Dissemination – elective module

Location
Royal School of Library and Information Science, Copenhagen

Year and Term
2013, Spring

ECTS credits
10 ECTS

Instructors:
Elke Greifeneder, www.iva.dk/eg

Appetizer
With mobile devices such as tablet PCs or smartphones, the information use can take place at any chosen place or chosen time of the user. Understanding the context of this information use is therefore essential for conducting user studies and developing user-oriented services. Users will show a different behavior if they are in a good or bad mood or if they were distracted during a user test. Information behavior also depends on the device. In the seminar, participants will discuss the notion of context and will collect and analyze usage data taking user’s context into account.

Content
User’s context has become a key part in information behavior studies. Context-awareness is a prerequisite for the development of user-oriented services and for the understanding of information behavior. The module consists of the following four parts:

- Analysis of the relevant sub-areas in context research
- Discussion of the various notions of contexts
- Collecting context data
- Analysing data from user’s context

Objective
Having completed the module, the student must:

Knowledge
- have an understanding of the notions of context
- have an understanding of the implications of context for user behavior studies

Skills
- be able to retrieve, present, discuss and critically assess previous work on context
• be able to choose an appropriate research design for context-sensitive information
  behavioural studies
• be able to judge the validity of usage data in context

Competences
• be able to conduct information behaviour studies in context-sensitive environments.

Forms of tuition
Lectures, group work, seminars, case studies, and student presentations. Students are expected to work autonomously and in teams with problems presented in class and in the literature. Part of the module will be based on student case work.

Literature
The literature consists of approx. 1000 standard pages. These are partly chapters from handbooks such as “The Turn”, and partly research articles. While a selection of relevant documents will be presented at the beginning of the course, the large majority will be collected and discussed together.

Sample literature

Language
English

Examination
All elective modules are assessed according to the 7-step grading scale with internal co-examiner. The examination form is a paper to be submitted at the end of the course. A paper: An answer to an assignment statement chosen by the student and approved by the instructor, which covers central elements of the module in question.

Re-exam
Re-examination form is the same as for the ordinary examination

Marking criteria
The marking scale is applied in relation to the degree of fulfilment of the competence goals, as described by the current Governmental Notice on Marking Scales.

The module is assessed according to the 7-point grading scale.
The mark 12 is given to:
For an excellent performance displaying a high level of command of all aspects of the relevant material, with no or only a few minor weaknesses

- The student is very certain in his/her analyses and reflections with respect to applying central hypotheses, theories, concepts and methods of information behaviour;
- The student can independently and with great certainty select and apply appropriate methods for context research and appropriately analyse context data.

The mark 7 is given to:
For a good performance displaying good command of the relevant material but also some weaknesses

- The student may with some certainty analyse and make reflections with respect to applying central hypotheses, theories, concepts and methods of information behaviour;
- The student is to some degree capable of selecting and applying appropriate methods for context research and appropriately analyse context data.

The mark 02:
For a performance meeting only the minimum requirements for acceptance

- The student is capable of analysing and making reflections at a basic descriptive level with respect to applying central hypotheses, theories, concepts and methods of information behaviour;
- The student demonstrates a basic capability to select and apply appropriate methods for context research and appropriately analyse context data.