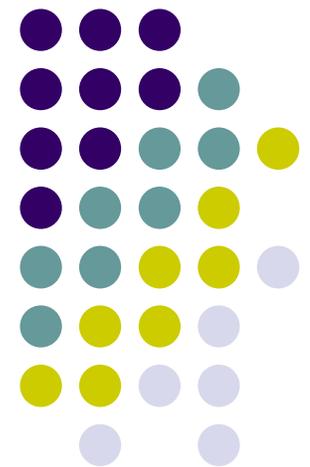
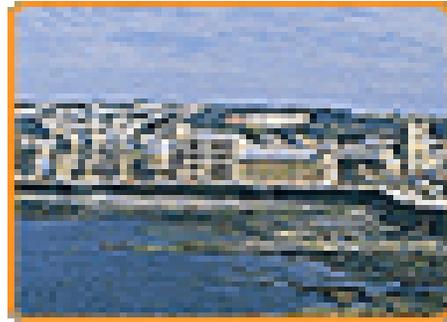
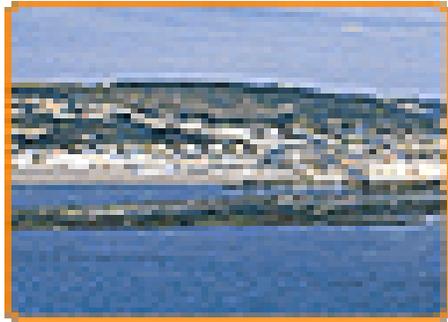


# Thoughts on skills and competencies for information studies/literacy

---

Dr Judith Broady-Preston  
Department of Information Studies,  
University of Wales, Aberystwyth  
*Presentation to International Round Table  
on Education for Information Literacy  
“Competencies and curriculum for  
information literacy”  
Milano, 16 March 2007*



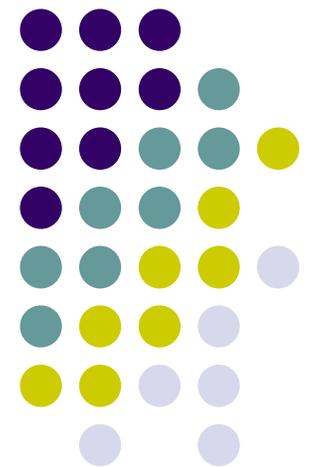


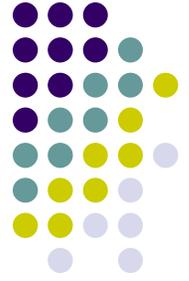
---

# CROESO WELCOME

To

Department of Information Studies  
University of Wales, Aberystwyth

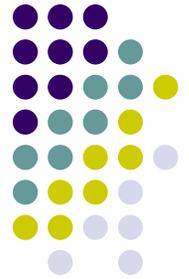




# Outline

- Brief background to current courses/ programmes/curriculum at Aberystwyth
- Drivers for change
- Definitions and concepts
- Professionalism
- The future?

# Department of Information Studies



- 1872 - University of Wales, Aberystwyth established 1872
- Approximately 8,000 students
- 1964 - the College of Librarianship Wales (CLW) established
- 1986 – distance learning degrees - Masters MLIS
- 1989 - merged with UWA and became DILS (Now DIS)
- 1972 - established as the largest school of librarianship in Europe.
- 2007 - remains one of the largest in Europe, and currently the largest by student number in the United Kingdom (1100 students March 2007)
- Welsh focus

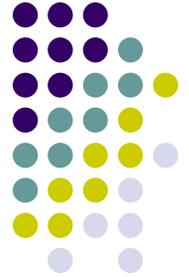


# DIS Student Profile

- Approximately 1100 students
- 887 students are distance learners
- 80+ students are full time
- Approximate total ftes 430

Postgraduate	54%
Undergraduate	46%
Distance Learning	70%
Full Time	30%

# Teaching and Learning



- Characterised by differing modes of learning and teaching
- Pioneer of DL in the professions and currently market leader in this mode
- 3 residential study schools per year - April and September (PG) June (UG)
- Dublin study school – June/July (UG)
- Increasing numbers of overseas students, particularly on distance learning courses.

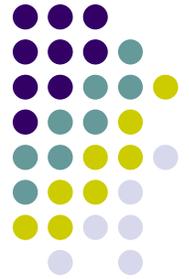


# Undergraduate programmes

## BA/BSc degrees in:

- Information & Library Studies (*Single Honours*) (FT/DL)
- Information & Library Studies (*Joint Honours in approved combinations*) (FT)
- Information Management (*Single Honours*) Information Management (*Major/Minor in approved combinations*) (FT)
- Information Systems Management (*New Single Honours Degree*) (FT)
- Historical & Archival Studies (*New Single Honours Degree Scheme, delivered with the Department of History and Welsh History*) (FT)

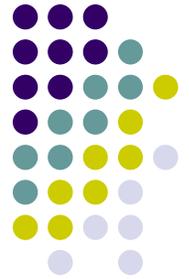
# Postgraduate Programmes



MSc Econ degrees in:

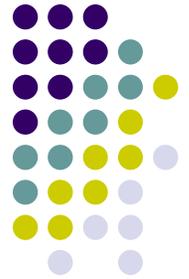
- Archives Administration (FT/DL)
- Health Information Management (DL) (Research Training Masters)
- Information & Library Studies (FT/DL)
- Information Management (FT/DL) (DL – Research Training Masters)
- Information Systems (FT)
- Management of Library & Information Services (DL)
- Recorded Information Management (FT) (Research Training Masters)
- Records Management (FT/DL)

# Information literacy (IL): context and future



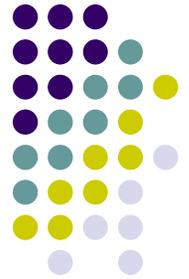
- Importance of understanding ***context***
- Need for
  - Flexibility
  - Lifelong approach to learning
  - Understanding of professionalism
- IL – synonymous with professional skills/competences?
- IL- response to drivers for change?

# Future trends: background

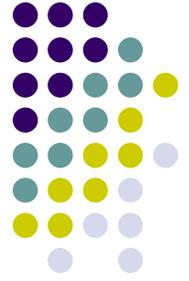


- “if libraries didn’t exist, they would not be invented now” (Fintan O’Toole, quoted in the Presidential Address, AGM, Library Association of Ireland, 9/03/2006)
- “it is clearly the case that the public view of libraries is that they are no longer relevant in a digital age” (O’Connor, 2006).
- New public library standards in England “may marginalise books” (*Bookseller*, 8 September, 2006)
- “Googlisation” and the rise of digital libraries
- Blurring of boundaries – two aspects
  - Professional vs paraprofessional divides
  - Borders between differing professions
- ‘Employability’
- Concept of professionalism – unique skills/knowledge set?

# Skills and competences: definitions



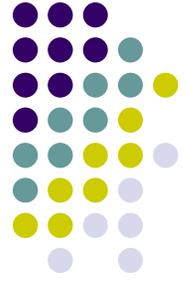
- *Concise Oxford Dictionary* definitions:
  - **Skill** – ability to do something well
  - **Competence**
    - a sufficiency of means for...
    - able to do
- “if we can think of a continuum ranging from just knowing how to do something at one end to knowing how to do something very well at the other, knowing how to do something competently would fall **somewhere** along this continuum” (Pearson, 1984).



# Employability: definitions

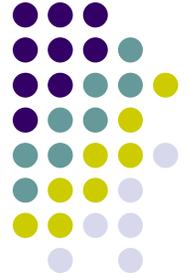
- Immediate employment
  - Acquisition of a job?
- Immediate employability
  - Acquisition of skills?
  - ‘Work readiness’?
- Sustainable employability
  - USEM: “a blend of **u**nderstanding, **s**kilful practices, **e**fficacy beliefs and **m**etacognition” (Knight and Yorke, 2005).

# Blurring the boundaries: differing professions?



- Unique skills and knowledge base?
  - BPK – Body of Professional Knowledge
  - Synergy – NOS 3<sup>rd</sup> edition “common core skills-set”
  - MLA – emphasis on cross-domain focus especially vis-à-vis workforce development
  - CyMAL – ‘joining together’ – organised by function

# Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK)



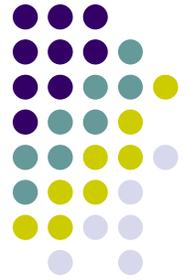
- Remit
  - Creation of new National Occupational Standards (NOS) and frameworks of vocational qualifications (VQs) for UK
- Possible integrated framework?
  - 2000 – sets of skills defined for each area (libraries; archives; RM/IM)
  - 2006 – proposals for set of common core skills (w/e 2007)
- Links to other NOS
  - 2006 for Customer service
  - 2005 for Using IT
  - 2004 in Management and Leadership

# LLUK: Draft Common Core Skills (July 2006)



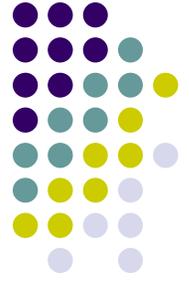
- 4 core skill sets
  - Team working and management skills
    - Self-management and self-evaluation (CPD)
    - Team player/team leader
    - Manager
    - Planning
    - Positive response to change
  - Information skills
    - Locate, retrieve and provide
    - Document care and conservation
    - Ability to use and evaluate
    - Stock knowledge

# LLUK: Draft Common Core Skills (July 2006)



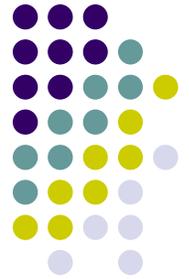
- 4 core skill sets (cont.)
  - ICT skills
    - “more and better” (!)
  - Customer focus
    - Facilitating access
    - Learner support (supported self-study/simple research skills)
    - Supporting Learndirect provision
    - Knowledge of organisation’s aims and role in delviering this
    - Knowledge of the customer base
    - Marketing and customer care

# LIMES

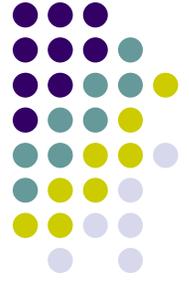


- Details
  - Project funded by HEFCE- FDTL5
  - Partners: Loughborough University; Liverpool John Moores; University of the West of England
  - Timeframe – January 2005 – December 2006
- Purpose
  - Enhance provision of skills-based teaching materials
  - Document same key skills for future employability and as CPD for information professional and librarians
- Developments
  - Establishing communities of practice under aegis of HEA-ICS to support professional learning

# Professional associations and professional education



- Issues
  - Graduate profession vs recognition/rewarding of vocational qualifications and work – based training?
  - Career progression
  - Mode of study – when, where and how?
  - Who pays and cui bono?
  - Currency and validity of formal educational courses
  - Recognition and rewarding of non-traditional routes into the profession – e.g. retail management, marketing, publishing etc?



## Moving forward?

- Fundamental questions/issues
  - Is librarianship still a discrete profession?
  - Do librarians possess a set of unique skills, competencies and knowledge?
  - Is it significant/important if the answer to the above questions is NO?
- Key strengths
  - ADAPTABILITY
  - Positive attitude to change
  - Library brand = strong and positive

# IL – the future?



"This is no longer a field for introverts ... information managers have to understand the impact of information on decision making in their organisations. If information specialists do not quickly develop a vision for the 21st century others will take over."

(Linda Stoddart, Director, the Bureau of Library and Information Services, UN International Labour Organisation in Geneva, Aberystwyth graduate)

# Finally...



- No easy solutions
- Hopefully a starting point for further discussion/debate
- Thank-you for listening – happy to answer questions