LIS 510
Assignment #2 Course Presentation IB Assessment
(Group Assignment)

In preparation for your final presentation, you've conducted a literature review and carried out field work. This assignment asks you and your group members to think synoptically about the work you've done so far and summarize it for your instructor and your colleagues. It should have three components: a literature review, a discussion of the field work that you've conducted, and a bibliography.

A. Literature Review

Out of the set of articles in the professional or scholarly literature of information science your group has found on the IB of your user group, identify the three or four articles that best address it. Based on those three or four articles, identify and describe, **in no more than two pages**, what the characteristics are of the information behavior of your group. Don't summarize the entire contents of the articles: focus on their conclusions and on what are the areas of consensus and controversy in the scholarship. (Or in other words, write an executive summary.)

B. Field Work Summary

For this assignment, select two field work methods (observation, interview, focus group or survey) and use them to study the IB of members of your population. All methods will be guided by a theoretical framework that you believe might provide insights into the information behavior of your population. Specifics about each method are as follows.

For *observation,* select a field setting that relates to your population and observe its members as they interact and carry out activities. To be unobtrusive, dress like your participants, etc., so you blend into the setting and fill a natural role. In total, you should observe your participants at least 3 (preferably different) times in one or more settings. A generic observation checklist is appended.

Record what you learned about information flow at the setting you chose, and reflect on the observation process in terms of methodological issues. Specifically, in your field notes:

- Describe the type of setting, its purpose when you were there and your observer role, diagram the setting's lay-out, and record who was present and why (to the best of your knowledge);
- Note what types of information were available and how that information functions within the setting;
- Where possible, document the types of information that people sought or shared and the sources that they used; and,
- Note any barriers to information flow that you observed.

Other Field Methods: For most methods, audio-recording will facilitate memory. **No email interviews**, and treat phone interviews as a poor last resort! A generic interview/focus group guide is appended. In general:

- Interviews – at least 3 people for 30-60 minutes each, depending on their time constraints (sample interview guide appended)
- Focus Groups – at least 3 people per group for at least 40 minutes
- Survey – at least 6 respondents

For Assignment #2, your literature review serves as an introduction to your discussion of the preliminary findings from your field work. **Thus, in no more than four pages,** describe the methods that you used (techniques, number of participants, sites, etc), characteristics of the IB of your user group—their patterns of information need, seeking, managing, use, and giving—as they come out in your field work (okay to discuss preliminary findings if you haven't completed everything). If your participants' IB conflicts with what you'd expect based on your review of the literature, speculate as to why that might be the case. Also discuss whether and why (or why not) their behavior is consistent with each others'.

C. Bibliography

Include a bibliography of work on the IB of your user group. This should include, of course, the articles you discuss in the literature review along with the others that you read in preparation for this assignment and your presentation. If the literature is extensive, don't feel compelled to include a complete bibliography: a page or two, in proper APA format, will suffice.

We will evaluate your work according to your ability to:

- critically read, summarize, and evaluate the professional and scholarly literature of the field;
- conduct field research to explore your participants' information behavior;
- identify issues of information behavior in the data; and
- identify and properly cite relevant articles.

Due at the beginning of class on **Thursday, Nov. 17 (510A)** or **Wednesday, Nov. 16 (510B).** In addition to giving a paper copy to your instructor, email a PDF copy to the class listserv on the due date.