Comprehensive Examination
March 2012

1) In pursuit of their mission in a changing environment, libraries, archives and similar organizations are undertaking collaborative initiatives to tackle common challenges. For a library, archive or information center of your choice, identify one organization they could partner with to achieve common goals or address common challenges. Describe one collaborative initiative they could undertake. Explain how the initiative will advance the mission of each partner. Identify two critical issues in the planning process for the collaboration and discuss how the partners can address the two issues to ensure success of their collaborative effort. Include references to the literature as appropriate.

2) One important consideration in the creation of a digital collection is the selection and implementation of an appropriate metadata scheme. Explain why metadata is important and what roles a metadata scheme plays in creating and maintaining a digital collection. Discuss three issues digital collection librarians should consider in selecting and implementing a metadata scheme. Include references to the literature as appropriate.

3) An information system development or acquisition project can be structured as a sequence of phases, often called the systems development lifecycle (SDLC). Define each phase of a common SDLC model. Identify a potential project such as developing a web site, digital library or application for a library, archive or information center of your choice. Describe one important activity during each phase of the SDLC. Explain the purpose of each activity and why it is beneficial. Include references to the literature as appropriate.

4) Modern web sites provide multiple forms of information (text, images, video, audio, etc.) and multiple ways of accessing it. Library web sites, for example, provide online public access catalogs (OPACs), databases, general search engines, etc. for a variety of digital material. The success of any web site depends on many factors, including its usability. For a setting of your choice, describe three guidelines (e.g., design principles, usability heuristics) and explain why each is important. For each guideline you describe, explain how you would apply it to a web site you may participate in designing. Include references to the literature as appropriate.

5) The ALA Code of Ethics states that librarians should provide the highest level of service to all library users through appropriate and usefully organized resources; equitable service policies; equitable access; and accurate, unbiased, and courteous responses to all requests. However, library policies and practices do not always conform to this principle. For a library or info service of your choice, discuss how this principle applies to information organization or information services. In addition, describe one challenging example and discuss how you would reconcile library policies or practices with this principle. Include references to the literature as appropriate.

6) Many LIS professionals sooner or later acquire management responsibilities, and these responsibilities often include managing limited resources. In the course of making decisions about priorities and resource allocation, ethical dilemmas often arise. Identify an ethical dilemma that can arise in the determination of priorities and resource allocation in a library, archives or other information service of your choice. Explain why your scenario constitutes a dilemma: what are the ethical considerations surrounding your decision. Discuss how you as an ethical manager would reach a decision, satisfying your ethical concerns. Include references to the literature as appropriate.

7) Librarians, archivists, and other information professionals are responsible for organizing and managing rich and diverse information resources. Due to differences in nature, characteristics and uses, those resources may require different approaches to their organization and description. Select two types of collections (e.g., traditional library collections, special or archival collections, multimedia collections, e-Book collections, and digital library collections). Explain their different characteristics. Compare and contrast two different approaches adopted to organize and describe them, including metadata or description standards and encoding systems. In addition, discuss the appropriateness and effectiveness of the two approaches. Include references to the literature as appropriate.

8) Designing a web site or similar information resource requires an understanding of both how people seek information in the online environment and how information can be organized and made available for information seekers. Describe two strategies information seekers commonly use when seeking information online. Identify two important components of a web site's information architecture and explain their importance to helping information seekers find information. Describe two important considerations in the design of each component. Include references to the literature as appropriate.

9) Information professionals need to monitor technology trends in order to identify those that could impact the information managed, provided or gathered by their organizations. For a setting of your choice, identify two technology trends that have had important impacts on an information-related function such as reference services, information access, information publication/distribution, organizational knowledge management, etc. Describe how each trend has affected the work information professionals do. Also describe how they have affected the use of the organization's information by patrons, clients or end-users. Include references to the literature as appropriate.

10) e-Books are becoming more prevalent in society and anecdotal reports indicate strong user interest. In a library or information setting of your choice, discuss what issues must be taken into account to build an e-Book collection. In addition, discuss two challenges (one must be technical) posed by e-Books for information services and describe two strategies (one must be technical) that can be used to facilitate and enhance user access to e-Books. Include references to the literature as appropriate.