

LIS901a

Building a digital library

2001–09–30

The latest version of this document is available on the web at <http://wotan.liu.edu/home/krichel/lis901an01a/lis901an01a.html>.

Course Description

This course focuses on the construction of digital libraries. It is not concerned with the usage of digital libraries. It uses only software that is freely available on the Internet. The digital library will assemble data that is currently dispersed on the Internet.

Course objectives

The course has two objectives. There are direct objectives of the course. These are

- they will have gained some familiarity with the Unix operating system
- they will have learned how to collect and transform digital data to extract metadata
- they will have an introducing to the latest developments in digital libraries

Second, there is an indirect objective to the course. This is that the practical work on a digital library will encourage the student to think about the issues that surround digital libraries. These can be metadata problems, information retrieval questions, copyright issues, etc.

Prerequisites

There are no other formal prerequisites for this course. Students should be familiar with the World Wide Web, and should be able to use a MS Windows computer, i.e. click on an icon to run a program..

Students should also be familiar with basic concepts of computer hardware and software, concepts like files, memory. Everything that goes beyond that will be explained in class or by personal interaction with the instructor. Basic familiarity with XML will be an advantage.

Students must be aware that this course is fairly computer technical in nature. A knowledge of computer programming is not required, instead it will be acquired during the course. A willingness to learn is essential.

Finally, students should be aware that the course has an experimental nature. They should think of the unexpected nature of problems that lie ahead as a challenge, rather than a nuisance. This course is meant to be an eye-opener into different perspectives of librarians' work.

Instructor

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Class structure

Classes will be held on Sundays between 13:30 and 15:45. Each class will have some presentation by the instructor. However a majority of time the class will work directly with their computers under the supervision of the instructor. Between classes students are welcome to see the instructor or ring him at any time.

Class details:

- 0 Introductory lecture
- 1 shell/unix/data structures
- 2 indexing
- 3 extra unix details

Readings

There is no book that covers the contents of this course. There are no readings as such, the majority of the work will be done on the computer. The instructor will prepare a series of handouts, all of which will be available on this web site. Students need to study the contents of the handout of one class before the next class.

Schwartz and Phoenix (2001) is an introductory book to perl, which will be of some use to students who wish to work further on digital libraries.

Assessment

The assessment will be based on three components

1. A series of small exams at the start of most sessions, whose unweighted average will count for 40% of the course grade.
2. A small metadata file that describes academic documents on the Internet. This makes 20% of the course credit.
3. A short essay on a topic of the student's choice, approved by the instructor. This will be handed in by the student four weeks after the last meeting of the course. This essay will carry 40% in the final grade.

References

Schwartz, Randall L. and Tom Phoenix (2001). *Learning Perl*. O'Reilly.