Evaluation of a Curriculum for Digital Libraries

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Categories and Subject Descriptors

K.3.2 [Computers and Education]: Computer and Information Science Education – *computer science education, curriculum, information systems education*.

General Terms

Management, Measurement

Keywords

Digital libraries, Library and information science, Computer science, Education, Curriculum development, Evaluation

1. INTRODUCTION

The authors have proposed the development and validation of curricular and educational materials to support graduate and undergraduate education in digital librarianship. The framework of the proposed curriculum is available at the project website, curric.dlib.vt.edu. Several curriculum modules have now been developed. Experts in digital librarianship and digital library (DL) education have reviewed each. Further validation of these modules will be obtained through this evaluation study, prior to their widespread dissemination.

2. EVALUATION METHODS

The evaluation of curriculum modules will be conducted as a series of mini-evaluations, each based on a single module. Modules ready for evaluation may be found on the project's wiki, curric.dlib.vt.edu/wiki/. Each mini-evaluation has three parts:

1. Review of the curriculum module by subject experts, prior to implementation in the classroom;
2. Evaluation of the module by instructors upon implementing the module in a class; and
3. Evaluation of the module by students in the class.

The module review is being conducted via the project's wiki. Reviewers are asked to critique the module's objectives, the body of knowledge presented, readings assigned, learning activities suggested, logistics and practical aspects of implementing the module, and overall structure of the module. Each module is being reviewed by 3-4 people, and the wiki supports their interactions. Modules are revised based on the reviewers' comments, much as in a journal's peer review process.

For each module implemented, the course instructor and all students will be invited to participate in its evaluation. It is anticipated that each module will be evaluated by 1-4 classes in the Spring or Fall 2008 semesters, and that each evaluation will include 1-2 instructors and 5-50 students.

Each module is expected to take 1-3 class sessions to present. Immediately after the module is completed, instructors will be interviewed individually. The interview schedule will include questions related to the same six criteria addressed in the module review. Students will be sent a link to a web-based survey that asks for their evaluations of the course content, their effort and learning in the course, and relevant demographic information such as their GPA, prior education, and experience with DLs.

Instructors' and students' evaluations will be supplemented by examination of students' performance related to the modules implemented. Instructors will use whatever assessment methods they would normally use, and will be asked to share any assignments or tests completed in relation to the module(s) (with the student's permission). These performance measures will be triangulated with data from the instructor interviews and student surveys in order to understand the learning outcomes resulting from the implementation of the modules.

3. RESULTS

As of this writing, seven modules have been through part 1 of the evaluation, and are ready for parts 2 and 3; there may be as many as 17 modules ready for evaluation during the 2008 calendar year. As of this writing, no modules have yet been through parts 2 and 3 of the evaluation process, but seven module evaluations have been scheduled. Final results of any field tests conducted during the spring semester will be presented in the poster at JCDL 2008.

4. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS