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Reflective Essay

I applied to Dominican's Master of Science in Information Management (MSIM) program with a vague idea of what I wanted to do. Nonetheless, my interests have always been in media management. During my undergrad years, I majored in journalism and photography, but I wasn't simply interested in creating content for newspapers and magazines. I wanted to run them. I've dreamt of becoming a magazine editor and helping shape the ideas so crucial to a publication's success. My career has taken quite a few detours, but one thing I've always loved was working in media and the arts. My original goal was to pursue a degree in the Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) program and focus on archives. The idea was to work for a museum and assist in curating collections for art exhibits, but I wanted something more dynamic. The web is thriving and always growing. Why limit my involvement to magazines and museums exclusively when I can be involved in shaping the ideas of the world wide web.

With that thought in mind, I'd decided to focus on the Digital Content Management track in the MSIM program. It focused on managing content creation, long-term preservation, curation of digital files, and record management. The concentration has also led me to pursue a Digital Curation certificate in the MLIS program, which would also prepare me for a career in digital archives and data planning. I was hoping to pursue a career in web content management; managing every aspect of a news media website and making sure all the components work together. The position could involve editing stories or laying out the content on a website.

Again, my career path has taken a bit of a detour. I'm now a Digital Asset Manager for a small company. My daily tasks involve creating digital libraries from analog materials such as photographs, negatives, and videos. I assist in producing metadata schemas, and digital curation

plans monthly. I wouldn't have received this position if it weren't for Dominican University and a few dedicated alumni. I believe the MISM program is on the cutting edge of what companies need to manage ever-increasing digital assets. In my statement of purpose letter to the admissions department, I said the degree would be the perfect marriage between my artistic talents and learning the technical aspects to make a website thrive. Now, I have a direct hand in designing online repositories for other companies. They can find their digital assets and make them accessible to the world. I'm proud of the work that I do, and the MSIM program guided me toward a path that works for me— a career that is dynamic and always changing.

The MISIM experiences that were the most significant in my learning experiences were the Information Architecture and Data Analytics courses. Information architecture made me realize that I was interested in a career in that field or User Experience (UX) Design. I loved figuring out how people navigated a site and building a blueprint for how the site should be laid out. The data analytics course challenged me to see the bigger picture. Learning how to program with Python was a memorable experience. I was able to use large amounts of data to create a story. Now, I know how I can use the data about user site visits to see how to improve a webpage. I can also use data from the Chicago Data portal and discover more information about a neighborhood.

The Digital Curation certification is also the highlight of my career in the program. I was able to delve deeper into creating web archives. One of my favorite artifacts from my e-portfolio is the History of DIY Culture Collection I've made using Omeka. It was great to create an online exhibit on a topic I care about. Every collection I receive in my role as a digital asset manager is unique, and this project helped me develop a better grasp on Dublin Core metadata fields. The

Digital Curation Plan is also another artifact I've created in the Digital Curation class. I use it regularly to create plans for other company's collections.

I also think my Information Architecture and Human Computer Interaction assignments were the best artifacts in my e-Portfolio. The IM 703 Information Architecture class laid the foundations for building a strategic plan to analyze, develop, and evaluate a variety of information technology solutions for website building. My 'In a Creative Mood' Information Architecture presentation launched my interest in the field of UX design. The artifact also made me think about building my own business, and now I know how to organize my site in a user-friendly way. I'm especially proud of my Chicago Theatre App artifact from IM 760 Human Computer Interaction. I had so much fun interviewing people about their theatre needs. The best part was building a prototype of an app! I think if I flushed out the idea even more that I could eventually create a real-world working prototype. I loved these projects the most because I was able to design a system from the ground up and use my creative skills in the process.

I believe my e-Portfolio demonstrates that I'm a thoughtful and user-centric information science professional. I want to make sure everyone can look at my work and understand the meaning behind it instantly. I want to design systems for the everyday person and not just for insiders who know the jargon. The most important aspect of being an information professional is knowing how to advocate for your role. Businesses aren't aware of most information management roles, and as technology progresses, there is an ever-demanding need for individuals to manage the massive flux of information. There are programmers everywhere, but I believe there are not enough people designing these systems to work with the user.

My perspective of information centers has changed quite a bit since the beginning of this program. I knew libraries and museums existed, but I wasn't aware of the large centers on the

web such as the Internet Archive. I've learned about different repositories such as Omeka and Content DM and how to design workflows and databases for these systems. I had very little information on the back-end technologies of repositories and websites, but now I know how to build a database, program for a search, and design information systems.

Now that I'm near the end of my time at Dominican University, I have a better idea of careers in the information profession. I didn't want to be tied specifically to a physical space but now I'm interested in digital curation and managing digital libraries. I plan to continue pursuing a career in Digital Asset Management and learning as much as possible about maintaining these online repositories in a corporate setting. I'm also interested in UX design and research as well as front-end web development. I will use what I've learned in the MSIM program to further explore these other fields and see if they are the right path for me. The MSIM program has solidified my love for design and I now have a passion for coding that I haven't had before. I want to continue to learn more front-end programming languages and design systems that are user-friendly and accessible for everyone.