



Answers by Michael Seadle, Executive Director of the iSchools

- ✓ **What do you regard as the most important information for introducing iSchools to a person who knows nothing about it?**

The iSchools are an international organisation of over 90 universities on all five continents. Members must have established doctoral programs and be able to demonstrate the ability to attract external research money. Many of the member universities are among the most noted in the world, and include Charles University in Prague, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, and the University of California Berkeley.



Michael Seadle
Executive Director of the iSchools

- ✓ **What, in your opinion, is the role of iSchools and its contribution to education in library and information science and to the current library science and information science per se?**

The iSchools are a chief source of professors for programs in Library and Information Science. The breadth of the iSchool programs makes it possible for scholars from a wide range of disciplines to participate in LIS education.

- ✓ **How do the iSchools operate?**

The iSchools are a non-profit organisation incorporated in Washington DC in the USA. It has a Board of Directors that includes members from Europe, North America, and Asia. The current administrative leadership, the Executive Director, lives in Berlin, Germany.



✓ **Please give details of particular projects and activities in which iSchools take part.**

The iSchools organise a conference every year. The iConference, as it is called, took place last year in Sheffield, UK, will take place in Maryland, USA, in March 2019, and will take place in Borås, Sweden, in March 2020. 400 – 500 scholars come from around the world. One of the important events is the doctoral colloquium, which is an opportunity for doctoral students from different schools and different regions to get to know each other.

✓ **Who is involved in iSchools, who are its members and how do they participate in the iSchools activities?**

The formal members are the schools themselves, that is those departments, colleges, or schools, which have been admitted and pay dues. In general the head of the school (directors, deans, or other titles) represent the schools, but most activities are open to everyone at member schools.

✓ **Which achievements do you regard as the most important?**

The great diversity of the iSchools means a wide range of languages and cultures. Relatively few organisations in the field of library and information science have such a widespread international presence. At present there are 44 American members in the American region, 29 members in the European region, and 19 members in the Asia-Pacific region.

✓ **Where do you see the future of iSchools? What are your imminent plans and visions?**

The iSchools are planning to offer more online resources such as video-based seminars on topics like "information integrity". The European region has long held video-based doctoral colloquiums, and a number of schools have started to offer joint student programs.

✓ **Where in practical life can you see the most notable influence of iSchools?**

The iSchool influence in the everyday life of libraries and other information resources is indirect. The iSchools prepare large numbers of students for libraries and other organisations that deal with information, and the schools ensure that these future staff members have the technical skills to be able to work in the contemporary digital environment, as well as the breadth of vision to provide future leadership.

✓ **What is iSchools' opinion on current education in library science and information science? Where can you see the potential for improvement and where has the situation already improved?**

There is always room for improvement in curriculum, and needs evolve regularly. Numerical literacy, especially statistics, has become an essential part of managing resources in the digital world, and some knowledge of computers, databases, and programming is growing as a requirement. Nonetheless students also need to understand something about the history of their profession, and to understand the social environment. Technical tools are invaluable assets, but assets that can only be used effectively in combination with a broader intellectual understanding. This is a key difference between Library and Information Science and purely technical fields like computer science. The iSchools prepare students for a complex social environment where technology is not in itself the goal, but the means to a worthwhile intellectual end.

