

Exec MSIM Capstone Information Session

Spring 2008

Executive Master of Science in Information Management
The Information School

All Information Management students must complete a capstone project in the IMT 595 course. This document describes the goals for the capstone experience, provides a timeline, and answers frequently asked questions about the capstone.

GOALS FOR THE CAPSTONE EXPERIENCE

- ***Student-defined Information Problem:*** In courses faculty provide students with relatively well-defined information problems. In the capstone experience, students define the information management problem for themselves.
- ***Student-defined Method(s) of Investigation:*** In courses faculty expose students to a variety of techniques that can be applied to information problems. In the capstone experience, students determine what techniques to use for the information problem they identify.
- ***Synthesis of Human-Centered, Technical and Management Strands:*** The Information Management approach integrates human-centered and technical dimensions of information systems. While a specific capstone project might emphasize one dimension or the other, it is expected that all dimensions will be present to some extent.
- ***Make a Difference:*** Following the overarching mission of the Information School, the Information Management capstone project should make a positive difference for the community in which it is carried out -- be it a business, school, hospital, or other context.
- ***Passion!*** The capstone project should be something the student feels passionate about.

CAPSTONE TIMELINE

Winter 2008 Begin to Brainstorm Possible Capstone Projects

Begin to think about what sort of capstone orientation you might wish to pursue. Brainstorm some possible projects. Think about who you might wish to work with and begin some informal discussions.

Refine Ideas for your Capstone Project

Narrow down your choice of possible capstone projects to a couple, and if appropriate, form a team.

Suggested Preliminary Discussion (Optional)

As you begin to formulate your capstone project, we suggest you discuss your ideas informally with Karine Barzilai-Nahon, the instructor for your capstone course. This is a good time to get feedback on the scope of your proposed project, etc.

Feb. 2008

Statement of Intention

A "statement of intention" describing the capstone project you intend to pursue must be received by the instructor of the Capstone course (Karine Barzilai-Nahon) no later than *February 9, 2008*.

While your statement of intention is not binding, it will provide an opportunity for feedback prior to the beginning of spring quarter should your proposed project not meet the scope, context, or other requirements of the capstone. The 2-3 page statement of intention should include the following:

- 1. Project Title**
- 2. List of Team Members** (if appropriate)
- 3. Contact Information:** Email Addresses and Phone Numbers (where you can be reached from February – April)
- 4. Abstract.** A two paragraph description of the proposed capstone project. As appropriate, please include a description of key elements in your proposal. For example: (a) how you will conduct a needs assessment, (b) the scope of your anticipated design/implementation, and (c) your impact assessment strategy. Different capstones may emphasize these elements to different extents.
- 5. Project planning brief.** Present a project management brief discussing (a) the project objectives, goals, and tasks, (b) the resources available to you for the project, (c) the constraints you have (d) the time line of deliverables, and (e) how the success of the project will be measured. You may use project management software tools, and should present the project stages using Gantt charts, PERT, or critical path analysis. Please see attached information sheet with project management resources.
- 6. Client/Sponsor contact information.** Include the client's or sponsor's contact information.
- 7. Letter of Support from Client/Sponsor.** Attach a brief letter from the client/sponsor of your project stating his or her intention to be accessible to and work with you during the quarter of the capstone, as well as the ways they will support you during the quarter. Such support may be their consent/commitment in allowing you to work on this project; resources that could be made available to you, etc.
- 8. Questions you need answers to:** Include a brief statement discussing the type of external information you would need in order to successfully complete the project.

9. Articulate the learning experience you feel you will get out of doing this project. This will increase the potential that your project is related to school rather than work, and will give you something you can clearly speak to once the capstone project and the MSIM studies are completed.

March 2008 Capstone Course Begins (5 credits)

6/6/2008 Informatics/MSIM Capstone Presentation
Each student or team of students will give a poster presentation about their capstone project to the Information School and larger University of Washington community.

June 2008 Completion of Capstone Project and Archival Copy
Written documentation of the capstone project, as specified by the course instructor, must be completed. In addition to any copies provided to the course instructor, an archival copy of the capstone poster and written portions of your capstone project must be provided to the MSIM Program Assistant.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. *Where do I do my project?*

Anywhere you can find a client to sponsor your project. It can be your employer, or any other organization with a legitimate project.

2. *Should I do a group or an individual capstone project?*

That's up to you. Both are viable options. Some factors you may wish to take into account include: (a) if you will be working in a situation where interaction with classmates will be difficult, you may want to present a plan by yourself (for instance, if you are performing the work in a secure environment where others may not be permitted to see the information you are working with). If you would like and are able to tackle a project with a group of classmates, this is also possible if conditions permit; (b) the project scope (e.g., how big is the project? a larger project may require the efforts of more than one person to complete in a quarter); and (c) the skill set required to do the project (e.g., some projects may require a high level of skill in a wide range of areas – data collection, programming, visual information presentation, etc. – so that it may make sense to assemble a team of individuals with complementary skills).

3. *What if I do a group project at my work place?*

You will need to carve out (de-couple) the “school” project from the work project and discuss this in the project brief.

4. What if my project contains proprietary or confidential information?

If confidentiality of any nature is required by the employer or “client/sponsor” of your project you will need to investigate the options of how this can be handled so that it does not affect your project. Solutions to this problem will vary from project to project and need to be addressed individually and as they arise. Some options may include non-disclosure statements, removal of sensitive information from presentations, etc.

5. Can I complete my capstone in two quarters?

NO, capstone projects should be completed in the quarter IMT595 is taught.

6. What if my project is really big and cannot be completed in one quarter?

You will need to discuss this in the project brief and define the project, its stages and the associated deliverables for the 10 weeks of the quarter as well as for the entire life of the project till completion.

7. Project Examples.

Let us consider “Information Management” as a space with four dimensions: management, information, people and system implementation. Your project could be anywhere in this space, for example, focusing only on management related issues, system implementation issues, or any of the others. You should provide context by showing where you fit in this space, so that it is clear that you have recognized that all of these are part of information management even if your focus is more specific.

Here are some examples:

- a. Develop a system design for adoption by the client and include socio-technical evaluation.
- b. Do a requirements study for the creation and integration of taxonomies in an information management system and provide recommended solution for adoption by the client.
- c. Build a policy portfolio for an organization in a specific information management area.
- d. Create a complete plan for an organizational information audit.
- e. Conceive and design a new department for an organization that centralizes the management of information resources and create a plan for how to get the department established.
- f. Perform a system integration between two data systems that requires you to map between the schemas of each system, draw data from each and produce a unified view.
- g. Assess the information needs of a group of people. Determine where in the organization the information all exists and design a methodology for drawing it all together into a unified view.
- h. Perform an information inventory across a large and diverse set of documents.

- i. Create a system design for the incorporation of taxonomies in a portal or web UI of client's product.
- j. Do a requirements study incorporating needs assessment, analysis of technologies, proposed solution, ROI.

For any project, think in terms of the deliverables you will provide to document the end result of your work, and make sure that you have scoped the project well enough to come up with some concrete products at the end of the quarter. They may be interim reports, a finished product, a fully-fleshed out project plan ready for approval, etc. The important thing is that you reach a point with your project that can be documented and presented by itself.

For all projects, evaluate your recommendation and/or proposed course of actions. You need to go back and think critically about the strengths, weaknesses, and challenges in pursuing your recommendations.

8. *Who will be teaching the capstone course?*

Karine Barzilai-Nahon (karineb@u.washington.edu).

PROJECT MANAGEMENT RESOURCES

Web Tutorial

<http://www.utexas.edu/academic/cit/howto/tutorials/project/index.html>

Web Sites

<http://www.projectmanagement.com>

<http://www.allpm.com>

<http://www.4pm.com>

Periodicals

Project Management Journal

Associations

Project Management Institute: <http://www.pmi.org/info/default.asp>

Books

A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK Guide) -- 2000 Edition

http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/detail/-/1880410230/qid=1036803794/sr=1-1/ref=sr_1_1/102-7359327-8408109?v=glance&s=books

Peopleware : Productive Projects and Teams, 2nd Ed.

http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/detail/-/0932633439/qid=1036803794/sr=1-7/ref=sr_1_7/102-7359327-8408109?v=glance&s=books

Project Management for Dummies

http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/detail/-/076455283X/qid=1036804108/sr=1-19/ref=sr_1_19/102-7359327-8408109?v=glance&s=books

The Deadline: A Novel About Project Management

http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/detail/-/0932633390/qid=1036804108/sr=1-20/ref=sr_1_20/102-7359327-8408109?v=glance&s=books