

Post-print: New Challenges in the Construction of the Information Resource Management Discipline after the First-level Discipline Renaming

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Abstract

The 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China has delineated a grand blueprint for advancing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation through Chinese-style modernization. In his report to the 20th National Congress, General Secretary Xi Jinping solemnly proclaimed: “From this point forward, the central mission of the Communist Party of China is to unite and lead people of all ethnic groups throughout the nation in comprehensively building a modern socialist powerhouse, achieving the Second Centenary Goal, and comprehensively advancing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation through Chinese-style modernization.” As professionals in the fields of library and information science as well as archival science, we must conscientiously study, publicize, and implement the spirit of the 20th National Congress, profoundly comprehend its essential substance, implement the guiding principles of the Congress through strengthening our own disciplinary construction, reflect upon existing problems in traditional disciplinary construction, guide disciplinary construction and development under the framework of Chinese-style modernization, actively confront the new challenges in constructing the Information Resource Management discipline following the renaming of the first-level discipline, strategically plan disciplinary construction, and better accommodate the nation’s strategic requirements.

Full Text

New Challenges in the Construction of Information Resource Management Discipline After the Renaming of the First-Level Discipline

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The 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China has outlined a grand blueprint for advancing the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation through Chinese-style modernization. In his report to the Congress, General Secretary Xi Jinping solemnly declared: “From now on, the central task of the Communist Party of China is to unite and lead people of all ethnic groups in building a modern socialist country in all respects, achieving the Second Centenary Goal, and comprehensively promoting the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation through Chinese-style modernization.” As library, information, and archival professionals, we must earnestly study, publicize, and implement the spirit of the 20th Party Congress, deeply grasp its essential connotations, and apply it to strengthen our discipline construction. We must reflect on problems in traditional discipline construction, guide disciplinary development with Chinese-style modernization, actively confront new challenges in building the information resource management discipline after the renaming of the first-level discipline, strategically plan disciplinary development, and better adapt to national strategic needs.

1. Information Resource Management Discipline Forges Three Major Systems

The report of the 20th Party Congress specifically states: “Accelerate the construction of a disciplinary system, academic system, and discourse system for philosophy and social sciences with Chinese characteristics.” As early as May 17, 2016, at the symposium on philosophy and social sciences, General Secretary Xi Jinping proposed to “focus on building philosophy and social sciences with Chinese characteristics, fully embodying Chinese characteristics, Chinese style, and Chinese ethos in guiding ideology, disciplinary system, academic system, and discourse system.” On May 17, 2017, in his congratulatory letter to the 40th anniversary of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Xi Jinping pointed out the need to “build a disciplinary system, academic system, and discourse system for philosophy and social sciences with Chinese characteristics, and enhance the international influence of China’s philosophy and social sciences.” On April 25, 2022, during his inspection of Renmin University of China, Xi Jinping mentioned that “accelerating the construction of philosophy and social sciences with Chinese characteristics ultimately boils down to constructing an independent knowledge system of China.” On April 27, 2022, the General Office of the CPC Central Committee issued the *National Plan for the Development of Philosophy and Social Sciences During the 14th Five-Year Plan Period*, proposing to “take accelerating the construction of philosophy and social sciences with Chinese characteristics as the theme, enhancing original academic capacity as the main thread, and strengthening the construction of disciplinary, academic, and discourse systems as the support.”

Information resource management needs to re-establish its disciplinary system, academic system, and discourse system. The renaming of “Library, Information and Archives Management” to “Information Resource Management” represents not merely a change in name but a transformation in disciplinary connotation and extension. Information resource management requires both inheritance and innovation, continuity and change. We must re-examine the completeness and maturity of the information resource management discipline, incorporate research related to “literature,” “information,” “data,” “knowledge,” “publishing,” and “culture” into the disciplinary system, and construct a complete first-level disciplinary system including second-level disciplines. We must strengthen theoretical construction in information resource management, produce more and higher-quality original and innovative academic papers, monographs, and textbooks, and build a distinctive academic system. We must emphasize the planning of topics for various funding programs and academic journals, strengthen the construction of academic conferences and high-end exchange platforms for scientific research papers and scientific and technological information, and enhance the construction of a disciplinary discourse system with research topics as the main body. The three systems—disciplinary, academic, and discourse—complement each other. The discourse system is the foundation, the academic system is the goal, and the disciplinary system is the strategy. Only when information resource management constructs complete three major systems can the mission of discipline construction be ultimately fulfilled.

2. Information Resource Management Discipline Constructs Academic Discourse

The report of the 20th Party Congress also points out: “Uphold the Chinese cultural stance, distill and showcase the spiritual symbols and cultural essence of Chinese civilization, accelerate the construction of a Chinese discourse and Chinese narrative system, tell Chinese stories well, spread Chinese voices well, and present a credible, lovable, and respectable image of China.” Emphasizing “Chinese discourse” means emphasizing discourse power. From an academic perspective, there is also the issue of academic discourse power.

Academic discourse power is the ability to control the direction of academic development and demonstrate academic influence. For many years, the traditional library, information, and archives management discipline has lacked academic discourse power, or at least has been seriously deficient. This is manifested not only externally (in the international academic community)—where Chinese scholars’ voices are absent from international academic forums, Chinese authors’ papers are scarce in international academic journals, and Chinese scholars are underrepresented in international academic organizations, which is incompatible and mismatched with China’s status and image as a responsible major country—but also internally (in the domestic academic community), where the library, information, and archives management discipline often feels inferior, reduced to a small, weak, and cold discipline, suffering from disciplinary discrimination

and marginalization, with low disciplinary status and limited influence.

Disciplinary discourse power is a natural extension of the three major systems and represents their commanding height. Without the establishment of the three major systems, there can be no disciplinary discourse power. Building disciplinary, academic, and discourse systems oriented toward information resource management also means constructing the discourse power of the information resource management discipline. This discourse power is reflected internally in continuously strengthening the academic and application value of information resource management, gaining recognition of its three major systems from the broad academic community, and exerting direct or indirect influence on other related disciplines, visibly manifested in being cited and valued by other disciplines' achievements. Simultaneously, through talent cultivation, the information resource management discipline demonstrates indispensable value and makes important contributions to libraries, intelligence agencies, archival institutions, cultural institutions, and information organizations at all levels of government and enterprises. Although library, information, and archives management has been renamed information resource management, whether the renamed first-level discipline can stand firm among disciplines depends on our discipline' s academic value and social contribution, which requires recognition from the entire academic community and society. This cannot be achieved overnight, but it requires the unremitting efforts of every scholar.

In August 2018, the CPC Central Committee proposed in a document that "higher education should strive to develop new engineering, new medical science, new agricultural science, and new liberal arts" (referred to as the "Four New" construction), formally introducing the concept of "new liberal arts." In 2019, the Ministry of Education, together with 13 other departments, jointly launched the "Six Excellence and One Top-Notch" Plan 2.0, moving "new liberal arts" from conceptual proposal to formal implementation as part of the "Four New" construction. On November 3, 2020, the New Liberal Arts Construction Work Conference, hosted by the Ministry of Education' s New Liberal Arts Construction Working Group, released the *Declaration on New Liberal Arts Construction* and made comprehensive arrangements for new liberal arts construction. In April 2021, during his inspection of Tsinghua University, General Secretary Xi Jinping emphasized "promoting the construction of new engineering, new medical science, new agricultural science, and new liberal arts." Library, information, and archives management has always belonged to the liberal arts (under the management discipline category), and the renamed information resource management remains a liberal arts discipline. Perhaps library, information, and archives management, compared with traditional liberal arts, possesses more attributes of new liberal arts. The renamed information resource management particularly needs to orient toward new liberal arts and strengthen its integration with technical disciplines.

For information resource management, first, new liberal arts requires new disciplinary concepts. We must vigorously introduce ideological and political educa-

tion into curricula, organically combining professional education with ideological and political education to address the questions of for whom and what kind of talents to cultivate. We must prioritize talent cultivation, as the fundamental purpose of discipline construction, curriculum construction, faculty development, and educational teaching reform is to cultivate high-quality specialized technical talents for the country and society. We must transform information resource management into a “hard discipline,” introducing and applying modern scientific theories, methods, and technologies to solve disciplinary problems in information resource management, and enhancing the discipline’s ability to solve practical problems and its practical application effects. Second, new liberal arts requires a new disciplinary system. The new national first-level discipline catalog has not announced its second-level discipline composition, providing greater space and development opportunities for first-level discipline construction including second-level disciplines. Information resource management must break down barriers between library science, information science, and archival science, recruiting and cultivating students according to the first-level discipline category. Information resource management must appropriately extend and expand its disciplinary territory while maintaining its core (disciplinary core competitiveness), as competition requires staking out territory; otherwise, existing positions may be eroded. Third, new liberal arts requires new research paradigms. Due to complex historical reasons, library, information, and archives management has never formed a unique research paradigm of its own discipline. Without its own research paradigm, it is difficult to form the discipline’s three major systems. The academic community should devote itself to summarizing and introducing systematic disciplinary research methods, research tools, research platforms, and research capabilities, continuously constructing research paradigms with disciplinary characteristics, scenarios, and values while drawing on all scientific achievements. Fourth, new liberal arts requires new evaluation systems. Whether new liberal arts-oriented information resource management can succeed depends on many factors, the most important being: whether the information resource management disciplinary system is complete and robust, whether the academic system is scientific and valuable, whether the discourse system is original and innovative, whether academic discourse power is recognized and influential, whether cultivated talents are competitive and respected in the workplace and society, and whether discipline construction adapts to and aligns with national strategic needs.

4. Information Resource Management Discipline Based on National Strategy

For a long time, the library, information, and archives management discipline has positioned itself as serving professional needs, completely corresponding discipline construction with professional development, which seems self-evident. Graduates of library science could only seek employment in libraries, intelligence science graduates could only work in intelligence institutes, and archival science graduates could only work in archives, greatly limiting students’ career

choices and creativity. Apart from these workplaces, graduates had no place to apply their skills. Although some graduates went to government departments, enterprises, and banks, these seemed to be “unconventional paths,” not part of the mainstream training series. This is the inertial thinking of vocational education, not the proper meaning of professional education, and even less in line with national strategic development needs.

Information resource management discipline construction needs to appropriately move beyond the category of “profession,” base itself on national strategic needs, shift from vocational education to professional education, and while cultivating professional knowledge, focus on developing students’ comprehensive qualities, research abilities, innovative spirit, and continuous learning capacity. It must resolve the contradiction between specialized and general talents, cultivate students with good social adaptability and reform pioneering capabilities, and enable them to adapt to professional needs in related fields and even different fields. Whether at the first-level or second-level discipline level, we must clearly understand what national strategic needs are—for instance, what are the national strategic needs for libraries and library science, for intelligence institutes and intelligence science, for archives and archival science, and for the information resource management discipline and student cultivation? Only by basing ourselves on national strategic needs can cultivated students have better employment opportunities and greater development space. To this end, we need to examine the faculty, curriculum system, educational teaching methodology system, discourse system, academic system, and disciplinary system of information resource management from the perspective of national strategic needs, continuously enhancing the ability of information resource management to adapt to, align with, and satisfy national strategic needs.

New Era, New Mission, New Connotation—Information Resource Management and Human Digital Ecological Civilization

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Grounded in the foundation of the times, answering the questions of the times, and leading the changes of the times. The 20th Party Congress of the Communist Party of China scientifically planned the goals, tasks, and major policies for the development of the Party and the country for the next five years and beyond, proposing to advance the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation through Chinese-style modernization. The report of the 20th Party Congress points out that the essential requirements of Chinese-style modernization are: upholding the leadership of the Communist Party of China and socialism with Chinese

characteristics, achieving high-quality development, developing whole-process people's democracy, enriching the people's spiritual world, achieving common prosperity for all people, promoting harmonious coexistence between humanity and nature, promoting the building of a community with a shared future for mankind, and creating a new form of human advancement.

The 14th Five-Year Plan and the Long-Range Objectives for 2035 propose the goal of "building a digital rules system and creating an open, healthy, and secure digital ecology." Digital ecological civilization is a new form of human civilization emerging in the current digital economy era and represents one manifestation of new forms of human civilization. Digital ecological civilization encompasses both the digital forms of existing civilizations and new civilizational forms brought about by new digital formats. Digital ecological civilization expresses the beautiful vision and unremitting efforts for the ecological development of digital civilization as digital environments merge with real environments, as digital forms intervene in all aspects of the real environment more extensively and profoundly, and as digital civilization develops from infancy to maturity.

In this new era where digital ecological civilization is gradually taking shape and becoming an integral component of human civilization, the information resource management discipline is being properly named through years of development, evolution, and transformation. From the perspective of disciplinary name, it clearly expresses that research objects are not limited to books, archives, and scientific literature and information, and that social service fields are not limited to libraries, archives, and literature and information service institutions. The library, information, and archives management discipline has long conducted unremitting theoretical exploration and made important practical contributions in information ecology, information value and information economy, enterprise knowledge management, government data management, health and medical big data, digital humanities, social network public opinion, and national security intelligence. The disciplinary renaming to "information resource management" is well-deserved, creating necessary conditions and an environment for the discipline to deepen and expand its research connotation and extension in the digital era and become one of the main forces in digital ecological civilization construction.

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Note: Figure translations are in progress. See original paper for figures.

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