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| Title | **Organizing Information** |
| **Due Date** | **Due Saturday** |
| Where to Post | Click on "New Post" button above and type your response in the space provided below.  Click Save. |
| Subject | Your Name / Organizing Information |
| Points | 10 |
| Criteria | * On time, posted in the correct forum, correct subject line. * Correct grammar, spelling, and usage * Includes all required elements * Describes a system that is complex enough to demonstrate multiple aspects of organization (see tutorial linked below) * Explains your organizational principles, demonstrates your understanding of how organization works |
| Objective | Analyze and understand an organization and retrieval system in order to better understand library research tools. |

To organize is "to arrange in an orderly, systematic way." People develop all kinds of organization systems to do things more efficiently. The yellow pages help you find businesses; the grocery store is organized by broad category; even your school has a system for keeping track of student records. You may have created similar systems at home to make life easier. In the information world, various tools can help you identify appropriate information sources. Understanding the systems of organization in general can help you think about the systems used in libraries and online to make your experience doing research more productive.

#### **Please read: [What is Information?](http://www.uri.edu/library/staff_pages/kinnie/lib120/info.html)**

#### **Step One:**

This assignment is designed to get you thinking about classification and organization systems and how they are used. Your job is to choose a collection of items and describe an organization system for it. This could be a system that you have used, you have developed, or you would like to develop. Keep in mind that this system need not be overly elaborate.

Choose a collection of at least 50 items in order to make this assignment meaningful. If you don’t have such a collection, you can make one up or describe a collection you’d like to have. Examples include music, games, movies, coins, recipes, baseball cards, shoes, postcards, letters, beads, plants, tools…the possibilities are endless. It is helpful to choose something you are fairly familar with. You can also use examples from the workplace: customers, clients, purchase orders, inventory, etc.

Your organization system must include the following:

1. A description of a collection of items, objects, facts, or knowledge. Explain what characteristics these items have in common that brings them together and what characteristics make them unique from each other.
2. The size and scope of the collection. About how many different items are in the collection? What is included and what is not? (Do not include a complete list of items!)
3. A description of how you or others most often look for items in this collection. Do you need to be able to find items by color, size, age, name, category or other features?
4. Describe an organization system, either that you are using or that you think would be helpful for someone using the collection. Don’t forget to explain the physical arrangement of items.
5. A description of a retrieval tool, either computerized or "card catalog" style. If you could design a way to search for items in your collection, how would you want to be able to search? What features of the items in your collection would you want to be able to search for?

Read the example below, where Lynn Kanne, a librarian, describes an organizational system for her spice collection (if only she had the space!). How would you organize your collections if you had the time? Have fun and be creative! **Post your essay in the Discussion Forum.**

**Example from my dream kitchen (my real kitchen doesn't have enough room for so many spices!)**

The collection is seasonings in my dream kitchen. Seasonings include all herbs and spices, which are stored in small jars. They are all used in cooking. Some of them are whole and others are ground. Some are considered herbs (mostly from leaves of plants) and others are spices (mostly from seeds or bark of plants). Some seasonings are made from one ingredient and others are blends of multiple seasonings. Some seasonings are associated with specific cuisines.

There are about 100 different jars of herbs and spices in the collection. I'm not including any liquid seasonings in this system.

Most of the time, I look for seasonings by name. Sometimes, when I'm improvising a cooking dish, I want to look through all the herbs or the spices separately. I also like to browse through just the "sweet" spices (cinnamon, nutmeg, etc.) or the savory spices. The collection includes many kinds of chiles, so I'd like to look through those together. Some spices are most closely associated with one kind of cooking, so it might be helpful to be able to find them that way too. For instance, the system should be able to find all the South Asia/Indian spices like turmeric, cumin, and corriander. Finally, I need to keep track of how old each spice is so I can replace it when it is too old.

The best way to organize these spices is by broad category and then alphabetically. The jars are stored in a cabinet side by side so that their labels are visible. One section includes all herbs. Another section includes all spices. A third section is "miscellaneous" for anything that doesn't fit one of those categories, especially the spice blends. Each major section is organized alphabetically by name so I can find seasonings quickly. The lids are color coded for the cuisine or cooking method each spice is most closely associated with. For example, lids are color coded for baking or grilling. Other lids represent Asian spices, Italian spices, South American/Central American, African spices etc.

Although the system in #4 will be enough organization most of the time, a small database (maintained by the kichen assistant in my dream kitchen) could help keep track of all the spices and their dates. And because cooking is a cultural endeavor for me, I'd like to know the origin of each seasoning. I'd definitely include the following information about each spice:

1. Name
2. Type of seasoning (whole spice, ground spice, whole herb, ground herb, etc.)
3. Country of origin
4. Date of purchase
5. Regional cuisines it is used for (Thai, Mexican, etc.)
6. Cooking methods it is used for (baking, grilling, etc.)
7. Other uses (for example, medicinal)

#### **Step Two:**

Post your 200 word essay below.