InfoLitGlobal:
A New Information Literacy Resources Directory

Heike vom Orde
Head of Documentation
International Central Institute for Youth and Educational Television (IZI),
Munich, Germany

Heike.vomOrde@brnet.de

The popular phrase "make people work smarter, not just harder," characterizes very simply how the concept of information literacy (IL) defines the character of the workforce these days. Defining and promoting IL as the most crucial functional literacy of the 21st century implicates that information literacy becomes part of a reflective and critical pedagogy. IL offers the promise that people will be able to become critical thinkers and independent learners. At best, they are empowered to become lifelong learners because IL forms the basis for lifelong learning. In this respect, IL becomes an important factor in today's information society.

There are different levels and different practices of IL worldwide. Currently, a fundamental change in institutional, faculty and library recognition of IL is taking place. Librarians start to define their roles no longer merely considering themselves as dispensers of information, but rather as guides who give the user the opportunity to make self-directed learning experiences. Consequently, information professionals better refer to a concept of their library as a "change agent" in this process.

"InfoLitGlobal", a new international information literacy resources directory, which was created by the Information Literacy Section of the International Federation of Library Association and Institutions (IFLA) on behalf of UNESCO, is a working tool for information professionals who want to play an active role in the promotion of IL skills. "InfoLitGlobal" was conceived as best practice and collaboration tool for information professionals who want to share their IL resources and materials with an international community and are interested in learning from colleagues all over the world.
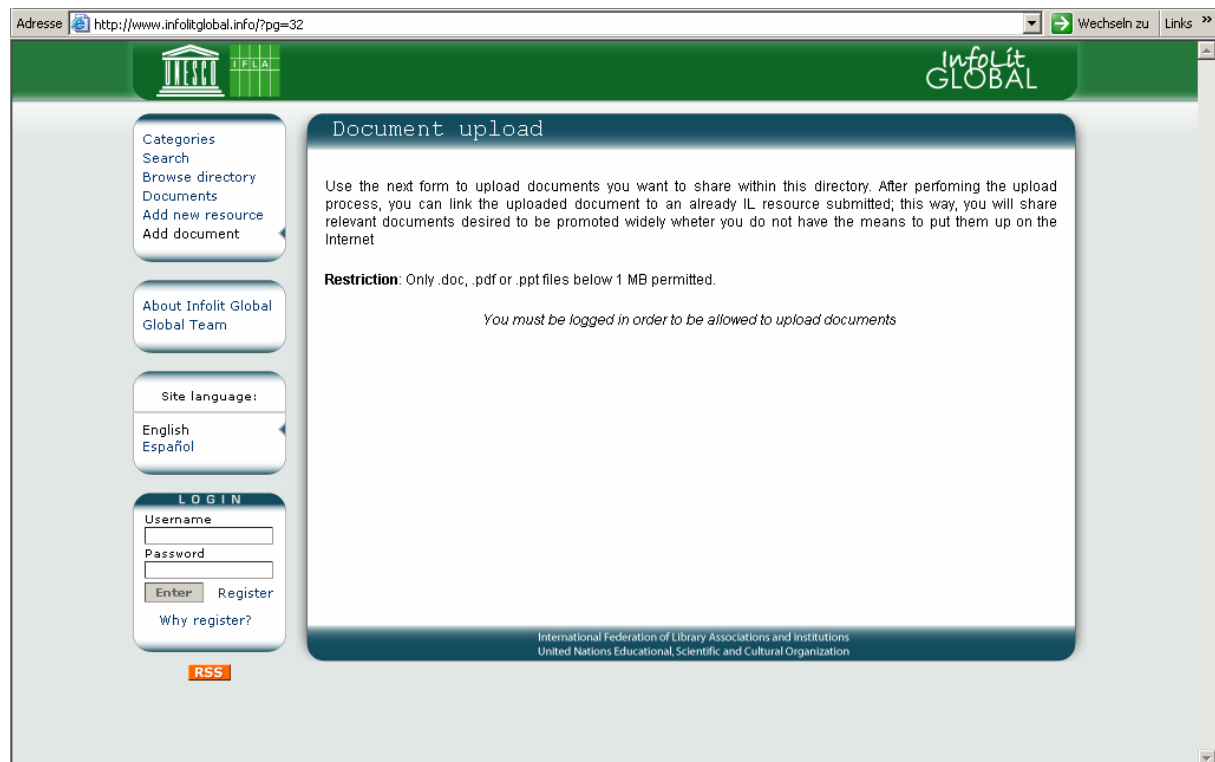
UNESCO's IL policy consists of awareness-raising about the importance of information literacy at all levels of the education process. An essential element of this strategy is the integration of libraries into information literacy programmes, as they provide resources and services in an environment that fosters free and open inquiry and serve as a catalyst for the interpretation, integration and application of knowledge in all fields of learning. According to this policy, "InfoLitGlobal" aims mainly at putting IL concepts into practice.

"InfoLitGlobal" is browsable by category and country, searchable by keyword and has a listing of the most recent additions. The categories are:

- communication (contains information on IL conferences, meetings, programmes, listservs, weblogs and websites),
- IL products for users (assessment/evaluation tools, credit courses, test, tutorials etc.),
- organizations (associations and professional bodies, IL training organizations, research projects and centres),
- publications and
- "training the trainers" materials (courses, degrees, workshops).

"InfoLitGlobal" provides the opportunity for registered users to upload their own resources to the directory. There are "best practice" information literacy outcomes that could be used as a model or guide for new IL actions in different parts of the world. Consequently, "InfoLitGlobal" as a directory of relevant tools can benefit the international community: some of the IL resources might be used as they are, may be adapted or could serve as examples to build new information literacy applications. Librarians, educators and information professionals are invited to participate in this global cooperative project so that practicing professionals can keep abreast of the most current and most promising practices.

At the moment, about 1.300 records on IL products, publications, organizations, educational materials and other resources are available online and free of charge for the user at www.INFOLITGLOBAL.info. The input and the usage of the "InfoLitGlobal" database reflect the growing awareness of information professionals concerning their role in the process of information literacy instruction and the objectives of their IL programmes. The concept of InfoLitGlobal is in accordance with an wholistic vision of facilitating a conscious information behavior in the 21st century.