Information Literacy for the 21st Century

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Information literacy ...

• Informationskompetenz
• la maîtrise de l’information
• Informaatiolukutaito
• Informationskompetens
• Las competencias en información
• La alfabetización informacional
• Informacní gramotnost

(with apologies for linguistic errors!)
“Information literacy is the adoption of appropriate information behaviour to identify, through whatever channel or medium, information well fitted to information needs, leading to wise and ethical use of information in society.”

Definition by: Johnston & Webber

International IL Logo: http://www.infolitglobal.info/
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information behaviour

- browsing
- searching
- encountering
- creating

whatever channel or medium

- people
- sound
- journals
- text
- web
- pictures

information needs

- work
- family
- citizen
- education
- spiritual
- fun

wise and ethical use of information

in society
“Information literacy is a part of civic engagement and civic participation, um, without even at least even a passing understanding of how information is produced, how it is constructed, how it’s presented, um, how it is—if one can say this—intended to be understood and interpreted, then one cannot make sense of the world.”

Interviewee: English academic

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**wise and ethical use of information**

- Wisdom
- Legal issues
- Cultural and personal sensitivity
- Intellectual property
- Impact
- Communication
- Data protection
- Data privacy
- Reuse
- Application
- Creation
- Context
- Ethical issues


“**Everybody Draw Mohammed Day**”

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Some issues

• “It’s confusing. I am told to share information for my job and for my “group work” assignments at university. Websites encourage me to “Share” and retweet.”
  – How can I share information wisely?
  – When does sharing become cheating or stealing?
  – Who does the information belong to?

• How can I be respectful in what information I present, yet also remain true to my own values and beliefs?
Most effort put in training people for searching ...  

“bumping into” information (Erdelez 1999)  

... but as important to teach information literate browsing etc.
“The irony is that while Google searching proved hugely popular, once people entered a site they would far rather browse than search again using the internal search engine. The advanced search function was not used by really anyone, and the higher the research rank the truer this was.”

(usage of ScienceDirect: CIBER, 2009; 87)
Context defining information need, nature of “information” & information behaviour
“Historians used and searched for information in very different ways from their scientific and social science colleagues, which is perhaps what we would expect – journal databases do not appear to make users conform to a standard form of behaviour. Thus for instance Historians used Google, advanced searching, basic searching and menus, abstracts a great deal less and recorded shorter page view times.” (study of Oxford Journals; CIBER, 2009; 102)
Information literacy has changed my traditional way of thinking about information. Before I used to see information only related to text and books, now information could be a picture, song, music, or it would be a word from the mouth.

(School Librarian 13)
“in nineteen of twenty-five [searches] … tweens used another person as the primary or secondary source of information” (p317)


Information: preteens

- Television
- Radio
- Books
- Magazines
- Websites
- Search engines
- Organisations
- Instant Message
- Email
- Telephone

“a tween might consult a peer, who recommends a Web site, which is vetted by a parent, and ultimately they together consult a store professional.” (p317)
Information Literacy and digital spaces and places ...
“The needs of the Google generation, reinforced by the developing Web 2.0 information environment, are increasing the importance of Information Literacy”

“We can play a key role in creating information literate citizens. We now have a whole new set of tools to enhance our delivery.”

Virtual World (Second Life (SL)): My students have researched people’s information behaviour in SL

Information tools inworld:
1 - Search in SL

- Sound
- Speech
- Appearance
- Movement

See: Webber, 2010
“Much of my information came from talking to people, asking questions, finding what they had done” (I3 07/08)

People
- Instant Message
- Discussion list
- Face to face in SL
- Face to face outside
- Email
- Twitter
- Facebook

Information: SL
- Books
- Journals
- Websites
- Wikis
- Blogs
- Search engines in SL
- Search engines outside SL
- Your own files
- SL Shops

“a wiki might give an example of a piece of code, but a blog may tell us a story of how the author came up with it” (Interviewee3 08/09)
Information Literacy … and computer games

“I learned all about camping, how to light a fire. “
(Interviewee IIb12)

“ye I go back and start the level again to see if I missed anything then I read it is it says anything for help. “
(Interviewee XIlg12)


Players try hard to work out the answer without googling for a walkthrough

Browsing, searching, evaluating, applying

- Text boxes
- Game environment
- Non player characters
- Game booklet & box
- Friends and family
- Walkthru sites (last resort)
- Review sites
- Search engines
- Forums
- Websites

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... so with Web 2.0, 3.0, 4.0 ...

- Can identify complex information literacy needs and behaviours in digital worlds
- Using print, personal and digital sources to solve “digital” information problems
- Using digital spaces to create shared material
- Need to manage information, and information flows: increasing problem of useful information (3D, multimedia etc.) lost in the “cloud”
Information literacy and people

communicating, sharing, co-creating

& not just “reading” text

"you don’t really know what’s happening until you get your hands on the patient and can see breathing, feel a pulse, what’s the blood pressure, are they pale?" (p409)
Being information literate with people

• When to trust people as information sources
• Good ways to “search” and “browse” different kinds of people (e.g. teacher, friend, employer, unknown expert, research supervisor)
• Comparing people sources with other sources
• Working with people to share and create information
“any survey that examines responses from researchers divorced from their context and role can provide only an incomplete understanding of their information practices and needs” (Study of UK life science researchers: RIN, 2009; 5)

• More education on “people information literacy”
• More education for collaborative information literacy e.g. co-creating documents and websites; working on information tasks together
Complex moves

Tween ➔ Tween's friend
Parent ➔ Website
Shop ➔ Shop assistant

Professional
Discussion list ➔ Website
Twitter ➔ Report
• People are following complex paths to find their answers
  – Moving between people, websites, print media, physical spaces (shops or libraries), broadcast media etc.
  – Includes linking, asking, browsing etc., not just search
  – Includes using technology to ask questions and contribute opinions
  – Cannot foresee all possible paths, but could help people orienteer
Information Literacy for the 21st Century

Context specific and context sensitive
Variety of behaviours
Moving along complex paths
Information literate in digital environments
Info literate with people
Information literate individually and collaboratively
Aware they are information literate
“It opens my eyes to new horizons which I did not experience before as I was blind. I was not able to see anyone except myself, my thought, my ideas and my life. Information literacy is to think out of the dark box and to see the sunlight”
(School Librarian 10)

Quotation from interview: Shahd Salha’s research into Syrian school librarians’ concept of IL
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References

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