Bridging the Digital Divide

Digital Libraries
in Information Literacy Instruction
in India and Germany

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1. Two conditions
2. Information Literacy
3. Digital Divide
4. Case studies: Germany & India
5. Bridging the Digital Divide
Accessing information
Germany: a big step forward

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Offline (%)</th>
<th>Plan (%)</th>
<th>Online (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>52.5</td>
<td></td>
<td>37.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>38.6</td>
<td></td>
<td>55.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>26.6</td>
<td></td>
<td>69.1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Access depends on age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Offline</th>
<th>Plan</th>
<th>Online</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14-29</td>
<td>94.5</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-49</td>
<td>85.0</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>4.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>50+</td>
<td>49.9</td>
<td>44.9</td>
<td>14.2</td>
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</table>
Two conditions

To use Digital Libraries one needs

1. Hardware and access
2. Skills to find and use information
How people search

- 1 keyword: 37%
- 2 keywords: 32%
- 3 keywords: 17%
- 4 keywords: 8%
- 5 keywords: 4%
- More: 3%
Low searching skills

operators
17%

no operators
83%
Information Literacy

To be information literate, a person must be able to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information. (ACRL 1989)
Germany: below the average
Digital Divide

- young • old
- men • women
- developed countries • developing countries
- rich • poor
- locals/citizens • immigrants
- highly educated • less educated
- info literate • illiterate
# Information Literacy skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson (90 min.)</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>academic work (basis)</td>
<td>define information literacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>library tour</td>
<td>preparing search</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>publication types</td>
<td>bibliographic data</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>library catalogue (OPAC)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>digital libraries</td>
<td>meta-search</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>databases</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>other specific information resources</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>internet searching and search-engines, specific use</td>
<td>choosing adequate information</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>evaluation of search results</td>
<td>reading techniques</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>MindMaps</td>
<td>writing</td>
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<td>11</td>
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<td>bibliographic description</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
India: literacy rate

- 1991: 52.2%
- 2001: 64.8%
- 2011: ?
India: internet accessibility

- 1998: 0.1
- 2007: 3.7
- 2016: ?
Education

• Libraries / Information Centres

• LIS professionals = educators: teaching / improving information literacy

• School → College → University → …
  Lifelong Learning
Social development

Examples: electronic payment (taxes), e-booking, online payment (insurance premium), e-banking, right to information, Automated Unique Identification card …

→ Digital Libraries: accessible 24/7
→ LIS professionals = educators
Political participation

Information Literacy
- decision making + problem solving
- critical thinking
- right to information

→ Openness and Transparency
→ Strengthen democracy
Academic Libraries

The two most important issues are

(1) the cost of building and maintaining sustainable digital library systems and services, and

(2) achieving the required information literacy standards so as to exploit the full benefits of digital libraries.

(Chowdhury 2002)
Bridging the Digital Divide

1. Technical → Hardware + access

2. Educational → Information Literacy
Strategies

1. Similar to various acts.
   - Right to free & compulsory education act (2009)
   - Right to Information Act (2005) and Informational self-determination in Germany (1983)

   NEED FOR “Right to Information Skills or IL Act”

2. Bridge Digital Divide – Systematic way
   - IL programs be integrated with academic curricula,
   - School to higher education – UG and PG as Core learning competence.

3. Need – convince higher authorities (University Academic council) UGC etc (LIS forums – Library associations)
Strategies

Need for National forum on IL (India) as it exists in Germany since 2002 and other countries.

- To promote IL as means of
  - Individual empowerment
  - bridging digital divide
  - information Literate Society
Strategies

Need to look beyond – Simple access to Hardware and software

Researches in IL – its role in bridging digital divide is still in preliminary stage.

More discussions, – user surveys – intensive researches are inevitable.

Role DL - reaching the un reached need to be promoted - academic, public libraries & CIC.
Conclusions

Illiterates of 21\textsuperscript{st} – Know to use digital information and Do not know

India – greater challenges-illiteracy (35%) besides teaching IL

Need – recognize role of LIS professionals as educators of IL – Bridging digital divide

Improve – digital infrastructure in school – public libraries – college libraries
Conclusions

Germany – Ahead – connecting its population to internet

Teaching IL – Part of higher education

Need – bring to younger learners
– institutions of adult education
– working people


