

Information Literacy Standards and the Politics of Knowledge
Production: Using User-Generated Content to Incorporate
Critical Pedagogy.

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One of my colleagues is a quiet, diminutive lady, who might call up the notion of Marion the Librarian. When she meets people at parties and identifies herself, they sometimes say condescendingly, "A librarian, how nice. Tell me, what is it like to be a librarian?" She replies, "Essentially, it is all about money and power."

In his recent essay, "Google and the Future of Books," Robert Darnton relates the preceding anecdote. Although Darnton is primarily concerned with the politics surrounding access to information, the field of librarianship is, as his colleague notes, inescapably political. One of the most traditional roles of librarians – judging the value of information in order to create and maintain collections, helping users meet their information needs, and answering reference questions – is indeed highly politicized and powerful, even if it is not generally perceived as such. In 1989, the American Library Association (ALA) sought to shift some of this power to users by codifying the notion of "information literacy" and using it as the basis of instruction. The importance of information literacy and its centrality to the work of libraries and librarians were reaffirmed in a progress report created by the ALA in 1998. Following this, in 2000, the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) developed the Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education (hereafter ACRL Standards). This set of standards, indicators, and outcomes has become the most well-known and widely-used means of conceptualizing, teaching, and assessing information literacy within higher education, although individual libraries and librarians have developed other checklists and rubrics that seek to teach information literacy as well.

This increasing emphasis on instruction and information literacy within librarianship since the late 1980s, as exemplified by the actions of the ALA and ACRL, has led some librarians and library theorists to consider the relationship between information literacy and critical pedagogy. Cushla Kapitzke offers a nuanced and rich poststructuralist critique of information

literacy, libraries, and librarianship (Kapitzke and Luke, 1999; 2001; 2003a, 2003b), and calls for "a critical information literacy" that "reframes conventional notions of text, knowledge, and authority" (2001, p. 453). Her work does not explicitly address the ACRL Standards but does critique other information literacy frameworks, such as the Big Six Skills, for emphasizing a hierarchical, generic, and positivist approach to information literacy, and for conceptualizing information as "unproblematic, atheoretical, and apolitical" (1999; 2003b; 2003a, p. 47). To Kapitzke (1999), the following are crucial to critical information literacy: "the social construction and cultural authority of knowledge; the political economies of knowledge ownership and control; [and] the development of local communities' and cultures' capacities to critique and construct knowledge" (p. 483-484). In other words, critical information literacy must explicitly address the politics of knowledge production.

Other authors have considered the roles of knowledge production and the ACRL Standards within critical information literacy, but not in depth. Swanson's (2004b) description of an implementation of critical information literacy acknowledges issues around knowledge production (p. 267), but he also invokes the ACRL Standards unproblematically. Elsewhere (2004a), however, Swanson critiques standards such as those produced by the ACRL as overly simplistic and mechanistic, and emphasizes the need for students "to understand where information is created and how it arrives" in order to be truly information literate (p. 72). Simmons (2005) focuses on the role of genre theory in critical information literacy, but offers a similar critique of the ACRL Standards as positivist. These positivist standards erase aspects of information - specifically the politics surrounding its production - that are crucial to information literacy, such as ownership, access, and who can and cannot be published (Simmons, 2005, p. 300). Doherty and Ketchner (2005) and Ketchner (2007) contend that not only are the ACRL Standards decontextualized, they assume information is predominantly procedural and politically neutral and thereby act to reify traditional media. Moreover, the ACRL Standards highlight and legitimize the gatekeeping functions of librarians and their role as authority figures. Elmberg (2006) and Jacobs (2008) both critique the prominence of authority within library education, as well as the purported universality of various information literacy standards. Elmberg (2006) goes on to suggest that information literacy ideally "involves the comprehension of an entire system of thought and the ways that information flows in that system. Ultimately it also involves the capacity to critically evaluate the system itself," again placing a critical assessment of knowledge production at the center of the concept (p. 196). In contrast to

these authors, Shanbhag (2006) does not address the ACRL Standards, or indeed any measures of information literacy explicitly, but instead focuses on the need to integrate discussions of knowledge production into information literacy: students "need to think beyond the singularity of the disciplinary model and understand multiple knowledge traditions and issues arising at the sites where they meet and create conflict" (p. 3).

While a majority of these authors discuss the ACRL Standards in some way and identify the need to critically engage with issues around knowledge production in an information literacy inflected by critical pedagogy, none articulates a substantial or substantive critique of the ACRL Standards themselves. This is necessary, because these are the guidelines by which many libraries and librarians, particularly within higher education, conceptualize, teach, and assess information literacy. It is unlikely that the ACRL Standards can or will be simply discarded, but careful analysis and critique can allow them to be more carefully deployed. Building on and extending the observations of these librarians and library theorists, this essay will carefully analyze and critique the ACRL Standards. Because politics and processes of knowledge production are central to a critical information literacy, and in order to incorporate the insights offered by anarchist, feminist, and queer theories, this essay will propose using user-generated content such as wikis, blogs, mash-ups, and message boards to highlight the inequities and power relations around knowledge production.

The ACRL Standards begin with a definition of information literacy:

Information literacy is a set of abilities requiring individuals to "recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information." Information literacy also is increasingly important in the contemporary environment of rapid technological change and proliferating information resources. Because of the escalating complexity of this environment, individuals are faced with diverse, abundant information choices - in their academic studies, in the workplace, and in their personal lives. Information is available through libraries, community resources, special interest organizations, media, and the Internet - and increasingly, information comes to individuals in unfiltered formats, raising questions about its authenticity, validity, and reliability. In addition, information is available through multiple media, including graphical, aural, and textual, and these pose new challenges for individuals in evaluating and understanding it. The uncertain quality and expanding quantity of information pose large challenges for society. The sheer abundance of information will not in itself create a more informed citizenry without a complementary cluster of abilities necessary to use information effectively.

Information literacy forms the basis for lifelong learning. It is common to all disciplines, to all learning environments, and to all levels of education. It enables learners to master content and extend their investigations, become more self-directed, and assume greater control over their own learning. (Association of College and Research Libraries [ACRL], 2000, p. 2)

This definition is followed by a list of the standards themselves. As others have noted, this definition and the following standards conceive of information literacy as a “cluster of abilities” and mechanize and universalize a complex, recursive, and highly individual process. The definition also dichotomizes information – it is either authentic, valid, reliable, and of good quality, or not – and thus embraces a positivist notion of information as external and knowable and ready to be accessed, an approach that erases the ways in which the meaning and thus the qualities of information—including its authenticity, reliability, and validity—are socially and politically negotiated (Elmborg, 2006; Kapitzke, 2003a). This reification of information also acts to depoliticize it, as the social, political, and economic contexts in which it is produced and consumed are rendered invisible. These discursive moves, combined with the very act of definitively codifying information literacy, foreclose other possibilities, and ascribe authority and power to those that do the defining and make the distinctions between good and bad information. The emphasis on the dangers of “unfiltered information” likewise moves authority away from the individual and towards some external and objective arbiter (ACRL, 2000, p. 1). Information literacy, in this definition, is bound up with knowability, objectivity, truth, and authority.

The politics of information do come into play in this definition: “The sheer abundance of information will not in itself create a more informed citizenry without a complementary cluster of abilities necessary to use information effectively” (ACRL, 2000, p. 2) and indeed, because information literacy “enables learners to master content and extend their investigations, become more self-directed, and assume great control over their own learning” (ACRL, 2000, p. 2), it is seen as politically empowering. At the same time, however, the definition moves to depoliticize the notion of information literacy. In its evocation of “the contemporary environment of rapid technological change and proliferating information resources” (ACRL, 2000, p. 2), the definition uncritically repeats dominant discourse about the postindustrial and progressive “information society.” However, May (2001) argues that this discourse is only made possible by a conflation of service work with information work and, more importantly, that long-

standing relations of power between employers and employees have persisted in the so-called new economy; this new economy is characterized by the precarious nature of jobs and exacerbated by outsourcing and offshoring, the replaceability of workers, and the increased surveillance and control of workers, made possible by better technology. The definition also emphasizes the “quantity,” “abundance,” and “diversity” of information resources that are available, thereby posing equal access to these resources for all. Both within the United States and globally, however, inequities in access to information persist, and this definition effectively writes out already-marginalized communities and peoples for whom the issue is not access to too much information, but access to any information at all. This reiterates Elmborg’s (2006) argument that information literacy is always contextualized by the social, economic, and political. Similar inequities also exist within the realm of knowledge production and dissemination, and are completely ignored by this definition of information literacy. Despite the emergence and popularization of the content-creating technologies of Web 2.0—which have challenged dominant structures of knowledge production and dispersion – much of the means to create and distribute information continues to reside in the hands of the powerful and elite. MySpace may offer musicians a means of distributing their work outside of the mainstream record labels, but like the *Wall Street Journal*, HarperCollins, and Fox, it is owned by Rupert Murdoch’s News Corporation (“News Corporation,” 2009).

The standards themselves are briefly mentioned at the conclusion of this definition, and are then fleshed out with multiple performance indicators and potential outcomes in a different section. The standards are:

1. The information literate student determines the nature and extent of the information needed...
2. The information literate student accesses needed information effectively and efficiently...
3. The information literate student evaluates information and its sources critically and incorporates selected information into his or her knowledge base and value system...
4. The information literate student, individually or as a member of a group, uses information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose...
5. The information literate student understands many of the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information and accesses and uses information ethically and legally... (ACRL, 2000, p. 9-14)

What is most evident in the list of standards, performance indicators, and outcomes is how information literacy is constructed as a foregone conclusion; that is, the information literate student, the subject of these standards, is already information literate. The list of actions that constitute this document represent information literacy as a stable, closed, already-accomplished condition. This representation leaves no room for differences in ways of understanding or approaching it, instead universalizing through tautology. This document articulates what information literacy is, but erases the processes that create it. These processes are arguably the most central to the project of achieving a critical relationship with information. Instead, this definition moves immediately to standard, measurable end results, and consequently downplays variation and process. Moreover, as this critique will reveal, the standards are actively engaged in promoting an uncritical consumption of information. This list, as observed by other librarians and library theorists, also focuses almost exclusively on tasks and repeatedly uses words such as “defines,” “constructs,” “implements,” and “participates” (ACRL, 2000). All of these tasks are performed in order to produce a product, as the performance indicators for Standard Four demonstrate (ACRL, 2000, p. 15). Kapitzke (1999) notes that this insistence on productivity embraces modernism and is thus outmoded, while Jacobs (2008) points out how this emphasis on compartmentalizing skills ignores the larger political and social goals of information literacy.

Despite the reference to “information choices” within “the workplace” and “personal lives” in the definition of information literacy that opens this document, the standards, indicators, and outcomes are consistently focused on libraries specifically – for example, by making reference to interlibrary loan and document delivery – and higher education more broadly (ACRL, 2000, p. 2). One outcome, for example, is “Differentiates between primary and secondary sources, recognizing how their use and importance will vary with each discipline,” several other outcomes also focus on disciplinary knowledge (ACRL, 2000, p. 8). This is not surprising given ACRL’s orientation, but it does undercut the universality the Standards attempt to achieve by privileging academic literacy over other forms. Academic disciplines, as Doherty (2007) contends, are conservative and tend to resist change; by treating disciplines as authoritative, the Standards portray disciplinary discourse and knowledge as “static and monolithic” rather than highly political and contested, a move Simmons (2005, p. 300) perceives as anathema to critical information literacy. The erasure of diversity within disciplines and the privileging of already dominant processes, literacies, and epistemologies in the Standards can act, as Elmberg (2006) argues, to

reproduce sociocultural, political, and economic hierarchies by creating good students with “standardized knowledge” and labeling “nonconforming students” as “rejects” (p. 194).

Knowledge production within the disciplines is thus ignored in the Standards, as is knowledge production more generally. The outcomes for Standard One, Performance Indicator Two gesture towards the issues of knowledge production but are uncritical: the information literate student “Knows how information is formally and informally produced, organized, and disseminated” and “Recognizes that knowledge can be organized into disciplines that influence the way information is accessed” (ACRL, 2000, p. 8). The student is not required to know or recognize how knowledge production and organization impacts content and is thus politically charged. This stress on information organization, access, format, and audience evokes traditional, print-based bibliographic instruction, which Kapitzke (2001) asserts may be obsolete. As with the definition of information literacy discussed previously, the standards understand information as being “out there,” waiting to be accessed: “The information literate student extracts, records, and manages the information and its sources” (ACRL, 2000, p. 10). In these instances, the Standards appeal to some sort of authority – the norms of the discipline or the systems that structure information. One of the outcomes for Standard Two explicitly refers to several types of authoritative entities, both academic and professional, including the library: “Uses specialized online or in person services available at the institution to retrieve information needed (e.g. interlibrary loan/document delivery, professional associations, institutional research offices, community resources, experts, and practitioners)” (ACRL, 2000, p. 10). Standard Three seems to be closely related to critical information literacy – “The information literate student evaluates information and its sources critically and incorporates selected information into his or her knowledge base and value system” (ACRL, 2000, p. 11) – but unquestioningly embraces the notion of authority. Indicator 2 and its outcomes deserve to be examined in depth:

Performance Indicator

2. The information literate student articulates and applies initial criteria for evaluating both the information and its sources.

Outcomes Include:

a. Examines and compares information from various sources in order to evaluate reliability, validity, accuracy, authority, timeliness, and point of view or bias

- b. Analyzes the structure and logic of supporting arguments or methods
- c. Recognizes prejudice, deception, or manipulation
- d. Recognizes the cultural, physical, or other context within which the information was created and understands the impact of context on interpreting the information. (ACRL, 2000, p. 11)

Information is once again depicted as dualistic, as either reliable or not, valid or invalid, ignoring that all information is inherently limited and biased (Swanson 2004a). Outcome (a) specifically appeals to criteria of “reliability, validity, accuracy, authority, [and] timeliness,” as though these characteristics are always transparent rather than situationally constructed. It also treats “point of view or bias” as though objectivity is possible, as though information can somehow be removed from the context in which it produced and consumed. Similarly, “prejudice, deception, or manipulation,” in Outcome (c) are also understood to be transparent, objective, and obvious. It is not apparent whose criteria are being applied, but the language indicates some sort of authoritative entity—possibly, given the rest of the Standards, the library or university. By encouraging learners to approach information in this dualistic way and by invoking the existence of objective standards by which it should be assessed, the Standards inevitably lead to an uncritical consumption of information. Outcome (d) signals some form of cultural relativism or historical sensitivity, but explicitly ignores the political and economic context of knowledge production, which is central to critical information literacy. Indicator 4 continues in this vein, as does Indicator 6, in which “The information literate student validates understanding and interpretation of the information through discourse with other individuals, subject-area experts, and/or practitioners” after having “[determined] whether to incorporate or reject viewpoints encountered” (ACRL, 2000, p. 12). There is once again an appeal to some form of academic, professional, or disciplinary authority and the deployment of positivism. Truth and facts are perceived to be knowable and objective. They can be accessed and then simply accepted or rejected, rather than existing as the “raw material” learners can use to create their own views (Elmberg, 2006, p. 198). Throughout these standards, indicators, and outcomes, the student is constructed as the passive recipient of information in the form of truth or facts; the emphasis on authority, combined with the passivity of the learners, evoke Paulo Freire’s notion of “banking education,” with the library functioning as bank (Doherty and Ketchner, 2005; Elmberg, 2006; Jacobs, 2008).

In addition to focusing on traditional locations of authority, the ACRL Standards dwell on learning to use the systems that create and structure information—what Elmberg (2006, p. 197) refers to as the “grammar of information”—without any critical sense of those systems. One of the outcomes for Standard Two, for example, is “Constructs a search strategy using appropriate commands for the information retrieval system selection (e.g. Boolean operators, truncation, and proximity for search engines; internal organizers such as indexes for books)” (ACRL, 2000, p. 10). There is no sense here that teaching *about* information, including the ways in which these grammars of information deploy a particular worldview, is needed; being able to use the tools is sufficient (Swanson, 2004b; Elmberg, 2006). Standard Five is the potentially most significant in terms of critical information literacy. One of the indicators for this Standard demands that “The information literate student understands many of the ethical, legal, and socio-economic issues surrounding information and information technology” (ACRL, 2000, p. 14). However, the issues listed, while important, again emphasize the procedural rather than critical aspect of information literacy: privacy and security; censorship and freedom of speech; issues around intellectual property, copyright, and fair use; plagiarism and citation. One outcome gestures towards issues around knowledge production by referring to “free vs. fee-based access to information” (ACRL, 2000, p. 14), but there is no recognition that these topics are part of a system of information creation, production, distribution, and consumption, and no systemic critique, which Elmberg contends is key to a critical information literacy (2006, p. 196). The information literate student “follows laws, regulations, institutional policies, and etiquette related to the access and use of information resources,” rules that are presented as natural and inevitable rather than socially produced and continually contested (ACRL, 2000, p. 14).

As this analysis demonstrates, traditional and institutionalized understandings of information literacy, as embodied in the ACRL Standards, do not adequately address the politics and processes of knowledge production. Instead, they emphasize a notion of information as dichotomous, objective, and apolitical, and appeal to traditional authorities such as libraries and academic disciplines. A critical approach to knowledge production is crucial to critical information literacy. As Kapitzke argues, “Considering the power of information networks to connect and disconnect, and to include and exclude, any pedagogy that ignores the political economy of information does a disservice to students” (2001, p. 453-454). In order to address this gap in the dominant conception of information

literacy, and to incorporate critical pedagogy as well as antiracist, queer, and feminist perspectives, user-generated content such as wikis, blogs, mash-ups, and message boards, can be strategically employed in the library classroom to enable the discussion of inequities in knowledge production.

Swanson (2004b) observes that "Students enter our classrooms with their own experiences as users of information. This is a common ground from which we can enter a discussion about using and finding information" (2004b, p. 265). Similarly, Simmons (2005) advocates for using genre pedagogy to create a dialogue between the dominant discursive practices of higher education and those of students: "Teaching about genre fosters in students an awareness of the social construction of discourses so that the students can use but also challenge these genre distinctions [and] see that genres are social constructions that have developed in response to a social need" (p. 302). Doherty and Ketchner (2005) also emphasize the need for dialogue as opposed to "banking education" and suggest achieving it by relinquishing authority and building on the experiences of students. To each of these authors, critical information literacy necessitates some sort of dialogic process and creation of common ground between students and teacher; one way of creating this is through the discussion of user-generated content within the context of information literacy, as many students will have had some experience with this form of information.

The diffusion of knowledge production to locations outside of or marginal to traditional locations of power that has accompanied the increasing popularity of user-generated content has opened up space in which these types of inequities can be contested. Strategic use of user-generated content thus also offers the opportunity to incorporate antiracist, feminist, and queer perspectives into information literacy instruction, as well as prompting the questioning of inequities and hierarchies in knowledge production in two distinct, but related, ways. First, the content found in user-generated information itself can offer a challenge to dominant and mainstream discourse by introducing the words and perspectives of individuals who would otherwise not be heard. By listening to these voices, learners can begin to question the content of traditional and authoritative sources of information and move towards a critical understanding of information as always subjective, always political, and always inflected by social, political, and economic contexts. Second, the ways in which user-generated content is produced and disseminated can contrast and thus expose the otherwise invisible infrastructures of dominant forms of knowledge production, including whose voices and perspectives they validate, and whose they do not. The contrast between user-generated

content and dominant systems of knowledge production open up a space in which learners can begin to grasp and assess the political, economic, and social inequities that infect knowledge production, distribution, and consumption, and thus move towards a more critical view of information that challenges the emphasis within the Standards on information as objective and apolitical, as well as their embrace of authority.

Confessions of a College Call Girl is a blog written by an anonymous New York City sex worker between January 2007 and October 2008. (It is not currently being updated.) While many entries recount her experiences as a sex worker, College Call Girl also critically analyzes her childhood, her identity, her motivations for choosing sex work and the results of this choice, and the industry itself. In lighter moments, she comments on television shows and movies, and provides biographical sketches of "Hookers in History." The overall tone of the blog is ambiguous and conflicted; somewhat surprisingly, given the subject matter, the entries are open for comments. Many of those who comment self-identify as either current or former sex workers, while others seem to read the blog for narrative content. Here, College Call Girl responds to email from readers:

I know I'm not the only reason you want to try sex work. But I know also that you're responding to something you've found in my writing—the vicarious thrill of someone who seems to have played with fire and barely singed her fingertips. That glamour exists—the empowerment of getting away with something, embracing your sexuality and behaving in a way society tells you you're not supposed to. It can be empowering to get something back on the body that has for so long been used and abused and objectified. And the money is good. But there's another side to this deal that I'm afraid I haven't shown you. (Confessions of a College Call Girl, 2007)

One of the final entries includes a letter to one of her customers, with whom she eventually became romantically involved:

I liked it at first—it seemed easy and fun and I was a broke-ass arty chick in NYC driven to desperate measures. But I really started to hate myself, my body, sex, men, money...I've always been a huge sex-work advocate as a woman and a feminist but now I believe there really isn't a way to sell your body and be healthy. There isn't a way to keep from getting broken. ("Confessions of a College Call Girl," 2008)

These entries and the corresponding comments particularly, and the perspectives of sex workers themselves more broadly, can productively trouble second- and third-wave feminist analyses of sex work as either

entirely oppressive or ultimately liberatory. Texts such as *Confessions of a College Call Girl*, when combined with others such as peer-reviewed women's studies journals, scholarly books on the subject of sex work, mainstream media coverage of the investigation and resignation of Eliot Spitzer, and films such as *Pretty Woman*, can help students ask questions about differences between the knowledge produced in each location, such as those Simmons (2005) poses: "Who owns and sells knowledge? Who has access to information? What counts as information or knowledge? ... Whose voices get published? ... Whose voices do not get published?" (p. 300). In this example, students could consider whether the perspective provided by *College Call Girl* could be heard through academic presses or mass media, if her blog could ever be a book in a university library, if her depressing narratives of repeated sexual assault would be depicted in a popular movie or television show. By articulating these issues, students can begin to engage with issues of knowledge production in a way that moves beyond the ACRL Standards; instead of searching for truth, facts, or authenticity, students encounter multivocality, the differential valuing of texts and voices, and the power disparities that characterize knowledge production. As Doherty (2007) suggests, "critical information literacy needs to de-reify traditional media and open up to all forms of knowledge" (p. 5). At the same time, however, the use of user-generated content within information literacy cannot be uncritical, nor can the use of more traditional academic or popular sources.

Other examples of user-generated content open up other realms of power and struggle. The blog *Stuff White People Like* explicitly satirizes whiteness and (less obviously) middle-class norms and markers (see sat, National Public Radio, ironic tattoos), thereby challenging dominant discourses such as those found within mainstream media that render both as invisible, normal, and natural (Dyer, 1997; McIntosh, 2008). Racialicious critiques mass culture representations of race and gender—e.g. the ways in which drug use is tied to race in films such as *Dazed and Confused* and *Friday* and television shows such as *That 70s Show* and *The Wire*—and in doing so, opens up popular discourses around race and gender. A significant portion of the fan fiction at *FanFiction.net* and mash-ups such as "*Star Trek* + *Nine Inch Nails* = *Closer*" speak to the heteronormativity of mass culture, and make queerness the center of those narratives by reimagining the relationship between Harry and Snape in the *Harry Potter* series and that between Kirk and Spock in *Star Trek*. While these deconstructive analyses of mainstream and popular discursive practices and texts are not new to some academic fields, these texts present this information in ways that may be

more accessible to students and allow them to critically engage with dominant and authoritative forms of knowledge. Comparisons between the types of entries found in Wikipedia (e.g. "diaper fetishism") that are localized to marginal social groups and those in a conventional, authoritative source such as the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* can help students confront and assess the inequities and hierarchies intrinsic to contemporary knowledge production.

Produced in 2000, prior to the popularization and dispersal of Web 2.0 technologies that allow for wider participation in knowledge production, the ACRL Standards remain the prevailing means of understanding information literacy, particularly within higher education. There is undoubtedly value in a clearly articulated and institutionalized conceptualization of information literacy—in terms of defining professional identity, offering a clear, easy to explain and easy to promote instructional goal, and providing a way to think about library instruction in broader terms than just the ability to use the library catalog and databases. Still, the Standards are inadequate, incomplete, and inculcate complacency. The definition of information literacy that opens the document emphasizes the knowability and objectivity of information, the importance of traditional locations of authority, and the depoliticization of information and the systems in which it is produced and consumed. The standards, indicators, and outcomes are tautological, elide the politics around knowledge production, and ultimately promote an uncritical consumption of knowledge in lieu of any sort of systemic critique. The careful use of user-generated content in information literacy instruction offers a means of addressing these gaps, particularly those around knowledge production, as well as a way of incorporating some of the insights of antiracist, feminist, and queer theories and perspectives. User-generated content opens up a space in which to dialogue with students, in which hierarchies of race, class, gender, and sexuality inherent to knowledge production can be articulated and critically assessed, and in which multiple voices, including those of the margins, can be heard. The incorporation of user-generated content into information literacy instruction can assist librarians in moving beyond a notion of good, depoliticized information and into a more complicated and critical understanding of the politics and power of information.

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