Information Literacy:
Implications for Library Practice

by

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Scope of this lecture

1. What is Information Literacy, how is it related to lifelong learning, and to other kinds of literacies, and why is it critically important in library practice?

2. Challenges and Opportunities of IL in library practice

3. How IL improves library practice
What is Information Literacy?

Information literacy is knowing when and why you need information, where to find it, and how to evaluate, use and communicate it in an ethical manner.
What is Information Literacy?

**Traditional Literacy**
- Read
- Write
- Calculate

**Information Literacy**
* Computer Literacy
+ Information finding
+ Info Understanding
+ Info/Value Creation
+ Collaboration with others through communication

= Ability to solve problems, take advantage of information technology and networks

**Computer Literacy**
- PC Operation
- Email
- Word processor
- Spreadsheet
- Presentation tool
- Groupware
- Database access
Information Literacy

- Visual Literacy
- Media Literacy
- Network Literacy
- Cultural Literacy
- Library Instruction
- Computer Literacy
- Traditional Alphabetic Literacy
Computer Literacy -
Focused on how to use the computer and computer tools
Visual literacy

• “to understand and use images, including the ability to think, learn and express oneself in terms of images” [Braden & Hortin, 1982]
• ability to understand and use visual images in our daily lives
Media literacy

• ability to recognize the influence of television, film, radio, recorded music, newspapers, and other media
• ability to use various media to access, analyze and produce information for specific outcomes
• a media literate person can decode, evaluate, analyze, and produce print/electronic media
Network literacy

“to understand the systems by which networked information is generated, managed, and made available”
Digital Literacy...

- being able to access the Internet
- find, manage and edit digital information
- join in communications
- and otherwise engage with an online information and communications network
Information literacy as related to lifelong learning

- Information literacy is the ability to access and evaluate information effectively for problem solving and decision making.
- Information literate people know how to be lifelong learners in an information society.
- They recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate and use effectively the information needed.
- Information literate people are those who have learned how to learn. They know how to learn because they know how information is organized, how to find it, how to use information in such a way that others can learn from them.
Key to Lifelong Learning:

- Information Literacy
- Library Skills
- Information Skills
- IT Literacy
- Computer Literacy
- Learning to Learn

Lifelong Learning

Information literacy can be defined as a process of attaining knowledge.

- Determine the information need
- Access information
- Evaluate sources
- Incorporate into knowledge base
- Understand legal & ethical issues
- Use information effectively
An information literate person …

- recognizes the need for information
- recognizes that accurate and complete information is the basis for intelligent decision-making
- identifies potential sources of information
- develops successful search strategies
- accesses sources of information, including computer-based and other technologies
- evaluates, organizes, and integrates information for practical application
- uses information in critical thinking and problem solving
What are the implications of Information Literacy on the learning processes of our students?
Information Literacy implies...

- Students equipped with IL skills have the means to conduct independent inquiry to put them on the path to lifelong learning
- Strong IL capabilities are fundamental to the success of inquiry-based learning
- Information access and processing skills (such as using electronic resources to search for information) are a pre-requisite for students
- Students build 'higher order' IL capabilities in critical thinking, evaluation, synthesis, communication and knowledge-creation through inquiry
Taxonomy of information skills for students’ use...

1. What do I need to do? (formulation and analysis of need)
2. Where could I go? (identification and appraisal of likely sources)
3. How do I get to the information? (tracing and locating individual resources)
4. Which sources shall I use? (examining, selecting and rejecting individual resources)
Taxonomy of information skills for students' use...

5. How shall I use the resources? (interrogating resources)
6. What should I make a record of? (recording and storing information)
7. Have I got the information I need? (interpretation, analysis, synthesis, evaluation)
8. How should I present it? (presentation, communication, form and shape)
9. What have I achieved? (evaluation)
What are the implications of Information Literacy in library practice?
IL in library practice

- now the avowed objective of most library user education program
- is an expansion of instruction as to objectives, materials, and methods
- has evolved in the way that instruction evolved from library orientation into bibliographic instruction
- encompasses the entire world of information seeking to prepare library users to pursue the concept of lifelong learning
- extends its objectives to teaching information-seeking skills to all library users
- prepares library and information communities to use information effectively in any situation
Information Literacy as applied in Library Instruction...

- Stand-alone courses
- Online tutorials (such as using the OPAC, online searching, citing websites, etc.)
- Course-related
- Course-integrated
- Workbooks
  (to help students become independent users of information)
What Librarians must do...

• Teach the students not only how to seek information (teach the information-seeking skills they need), but also where to find the information
• teach them not only how to deal with the complexity of information retrieval, but also try to reduce that complexity
• create systems that eliminate the need for further instruction
• use their expertise to deepen students' understanding of the subjects or disciplines they study
How IL improves library practice...

- providing intellectual and physical access to materials in all formats
- providing instruction to foster competence and stimulate interest in reading, viewing, and using information and ideas
- working with other educators to design learning strategies to meet the needs of individual students
Challenges and opportunities

Libraries and information communities should launch as an effective group collaborative initiatives to develop

- models and “best practices”
- Information Literacy guidelines and standards
- changes in LIS curriculum to promote information literacy
- training workshops, seminars, symposia, colloquia as part of continuing education
Innovative strategies

• Librarians should become proactive in teaching information skills; they also must learn to teach.

• An expanded library user education program will include teaching the structure of information, use of new electronic formats, and applying critical thinking to information.

• Librarians will have to maximize the use of technology to teach more skills to greater numbers of users.

• More complex expert systems will be developed to help users with in-depth use of complex abstracting and indexing services.

• Emphasis will be on problem-solving and obtaining and accessing information rather than on ownership.

• User instruction will need to provide students and faculty with basic, intermediate, and advanced guidance in the use of the library.
Conclusion

The Librarians' role in Information Literacy and the challenges to that role

Libraries have long been acknowledged as the repository of knowledge in support of teaching, learning, and research. Even when issues like the “ownership/access” and “just-in-time” vs. “just-in-case” debates are frequently aired, the reality is that it is not a case of “either/or” but of “both/and”. Librarians now serve an enhanced role assisting users to find relevant information in the most appropriate format in a timely fashion (and at an acceptable cost to the user or the institution or both).
Conclusion

With the information explosion, use of technology, and the increasing variety of media, high demands require services to be available as, when and where they want them. So, more than ever, librarians must ensure that they are user-focused, user-friendly, and able to assist users to gain information literacy skills which will enable them to be self-sufficient.
“Information literacy is achieved when learners know when to use resources, access information competently, evaluate information as to accuracy and pertinence for each need, and learn how to use this information to communicate effectively, and most of all have the opportunity to bring about change and be creative. Learners who are able to do this have a life long learning skill they will need in the Information Age.”

From *Information Literacy in an Information Society* by Christina S. Doyle