

Information literacy sites

Background and ideas for program planning and development

by Esther Grassian and Susan E. Clark

What is "information literacy"? In 1989, the ALA Presidential Committee on Information Literacy stated that "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."¹ Since then, many have debated the meaning and use of this phrase,² and some have utilized alternative phrases or important subcategories, such as "information competency" and "computer literacy." Few may have realized, though, that the importance of this debate lies not only in the precise meaning of the phrase "information literacy," but also in the very fact that it is now used widely.

A December 8, 1998, power search in NorthernLight (www.nlsearch.com) on "information literacy" (in quotes, to indicate a phrase) yielded 8,879 Web items and 136 "Special Collection" items (articles). On the same day, a simple search in AltaVista for the same phrase yielded 9,510 results, while a HotBot exact phrase search yielded 5,730 items. Admittedly, some of these results are false drops, yet they do reveal a wealth of Internet sites for librarians interested in information literacy.

Given space constraints, we have selected a number of representative Internet resources that provide background, guidelines, programs, tutorials, and information on organizations and publications related to information literacy, and that will reward the visitor again and again with useful, up-to-date and relevant content or links.

Directories/megasites

- **Directory of Online Resources for Information Literacy.** A good starting point, this directory provides numerous links to organizations, papers and presentations, academic programs, and other sites. Includes an excellent classified list of instructional sites on topics such as critical thinking, plagiarism, evaluating sources, and more. The definitions of information literacy and related terms are especially interesting. Last update: August 15, 1998. Access: <http://www.cas.usf.edu/lis/il/>.

- **Information Literacy Home Page.** Another good starting place, this site provides links to Web sites about national, state, and organizational efforts to establish information literacy programs, plus an extensive bibliography of books, journal articles, and other publications about information literacy. Last update: May 28, 1998. Access: <http://www.fiu.edu/~library/ili/index.html>.

Guidelines and reports

- **ACRI California Association of College & Research Libraries (CARL).** "Draft Information Literacy Standards for Inclusion in WASC Standards." CARL took a "top-down" approach to integrating information literacy into the curriculum by charging a task force to develop draft language for inclusion in Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) accreditation guidelines. If adopted, this language would add information literacy

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to accreditation standards. The task force also provided a list of supporting documentation for outcomes assessment as an aid to evaluating whether or not institutions have met this standard. Last update: September 29, 1997. *Access:* <http://www.carl-acrl.org/Reports/rectoWASC.html>.

- **CSU Information Competence Project.**

Although this site is currently maintained at California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo, it describes a project, launched in 1995, that is being implemented system-wide on CSU campuses. The site includes project goals, objectives, a timeline, and a detailed outline for a three-credit course on information competence. Last update: No date. *Access:* <http://www.lib.calpoly.edu/infocomp/project/index.html>.

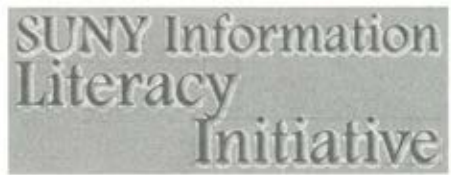
- **INFORMATION POWER: The Nine Information Literacy Standards for Student Learning.**

A revised and updated version of the 1988 publication designed for school library media programs. These new American Association of School Librarians' information literacy standards will be crucial as academic libraries work with other types of libraries to establish sequential information literacy learning goals and strategies for lifelong learning. Last update: Copyright (c) 1998 by American Library Association. *Access:* http://www.ala.org/aasl/ip_nine.html.

- **A Progress Report on Information Literacy: An Update on the American Library Association Presidential Committee on Information Literacy: Final Report.** This site outlines progress made since the landmark report of this committee was published in 1989 (gopher://ala1.ala.org:70/00/alagophiv/50417007.document). In response to that report, the National Forum on Information Literacy was formed and began work to carry out the recommendations made. This important and timely update reemphasizes the importance of information literacy, provides examples of successful information literacy programs, and makes recommendations for further action. Last update: March 1998. *Access:* <http://www.ala.org/acrl/nili/nili.html>.

- **SUNY Information Literacy Initiative.**

This initiative aims to identify information competencies and implement a system-wide plan for all 64 SUNY campuses. The site includes the committee charge, final report, references, and links to related resources on the



Web. A related site (SUNY Information Literacy Web-Based Task Force. Interim Report Draft #5) at <http://olis.sysadm.suny.edu/projects/ILI/web.html> gives the task force charge, recommendations for action, and an outline of information literacy modules. Last update: 2 October 1997. *Access:* <http://olis.sysadm.suny.edu/ili/default.htm>.

- **WAAL (Wisconsin Association of Academic Librarians) Ad Hoc Committee to Create Information Literacy Competencies and Criteria for Academic Libraries in Wisconsin.** This site provides the first draft of a set of competencies to provide state and institutional support for information literacy program funding. The committee has also posted a call for "Best Practices" submissions, which fit their ten draft information literacy competencies. Last update: September 17, 1998. *Access:* <http://factstaff.uww.edu/WAAL/infolit/index.html>.

Programs

- **UC Berkeley Teaching Library.** The aim of the Teaching Library is to promote information literacy as part of the undergraduate experience at the University of California, Berkeley. This Web site provides information about the Teaching Library's purpose, programs, services for students and faculty, and many instructional materials, such as, "Search the Internet: A Graduated, Nearly Failsafe Approach in 4 Steps" (<http://library.berkeley.edu/Help/search.html>). Also included are the results of an information literacy survey given to graduating seniors. Last update: August 98. *Access:* <http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/>.

- **UWired Web.** Provides information on the University of Washington's award-winning UWired program, a collaboration of the University Libraries, Computing & Communications, and the Office of Undergraduate Education. Of special in-



terest is a page describing the ten-week course "Information Literacy as a Liberal Art." The site includes information on UWired projects, facilities, and workshops, plus links to related resources. Last update: 1998. *Access:* <http://www.washington.edu/uwired/>.

Tutorials

Following is a selected list of Web-based tutorials. For links to more tutorials see the electronic version of this article (at <http://www.ala.org/acrl/c&rlnew2.html>), and the ACRL, LIRT, and LOEX sites listed at the end of this article.

- **Go For the Gold—James Madison University.** This "web-based program for developing information-seeking skills" appears on the library homepage. The eight modules include a library orientation, use of electronic databases, search strategy, evaluating and citing sources, and using the Internet. Each module provides objectives, information, and a multiple-choice exercise set. Also included are a glossary and information for faculty on how to use "Go for the Gold" with their students. Last update: No date. *Access:* <http://library.jmu.edu/library/gold/modules.htm>.

- **WebLUIS Tutorial—University of Central Florida.** A five-part site that teaches use of the OPAC, online article indexes, and other features, including very nice live interaction with the OPAC, using frames, and simple, easy-to-understand instructions. A survey tests user satisfaction and an excellent interactive quiz assesses learning. Users can choose immediate feedback and can retake the quiz twice. Last update: September 1, 1998. *Access:* <http://reach.ucf.edu:8900/public/libtut/>.



- **net.TUTOR—Ohio State University.** This impressive and extensive site contains Web tutorials on topics such as using the online catalog, searching the Internet, and evaluating and citing Web sites. Each lesson includes activities, related links, and the opportunity for feedback. The "Quality Checklist for Flexible Learning Materials" and "Program Content" are particularly valuable examples of the rarely documented planning effort involved in developing an

effective instructional Web site. Last update: 1997–98. *Access:* <http://gateway.lib.ohio-state.edu/tutor/open/courses.html>.

- **UCSC Net Trail—University of California, Santa Cruz.** This well-designed site leads students through four modules: Web browsing, e-mail, library resources, and newsgroups. Includes interactive exercises, an instructor's guide, and opportunity for feedback. Last update: 1998. *Access:* <http://nettrail.ucsc.edu/nettrail/master/>.

Discussion groups

- **BI-L (Bibliographic Instruction Listserv).** BI-L, the only library-instruction-focused mail list, was established in the early 1990s under the excellent direction of moderator, Martin Raish. BI-L serves as a forum for information literacy issues, as well as a home where instruction librarians and others can pose queries and get helpful comments and ideas from librarians with a broad range of instruction experience. *Subscription required:* listserv@bingymb.cc.binghamton.edu.

- **comp.internet.nethappenings.** This Usenet newsgroup is a wonderful updating service regarding Internet resources for all kinds of groups and topic areas. Listings are categorized into EJOUR, K-12, MISC, RESOURC, etc. and provide a wealth of helpful tips for librarian-instructors attempting to meet information literacy goals (e.g., "How to help someone use a computer," by Frank J. Heller. Use the DejaNews search tool to find a copy of this article: <http://www.dejanews.com>). *Subscription not required:* comp.internet.nethappenings.

- **nettrain.** Nettrain, a moderated mail list focused on Internet training, is also available as a newsgroup. The list is not restricted to librarians or library-related issues and can serve as a bridge to computer trainers. *Subscription required:* listserv@listserv.acsu.buffalo.edu. *Subscription not required:* bit.listserv.nettrain.

Electronic journals

- **The Chronicle of Higher Education.** The online version of this widely read weekly publication provides selected articles for free, and the entire publication to subscribers. *The Chronicle* is critical for those who wish to keep up with rapid, fast-paced developments in higher education worldwide. Articles and columns on education and technology are espe-

cially important for ideas and status checks on integrating information literacy into curricula. Last update: 1998. Access: <http://chronicle.com/>.

• **Educom Review.** The subtitle of this EDUCAUSE Association publication is "Learning, Communications and Information Technology." Articles published here can help librarians keep up with new technology and its relationship to learning, as well bridge the gap between the library and computing center staff. Last update: no date. Access: <http://www.educause.edu/pub/er/erm.html>.

• **SyllabusMagazine.** The Web site for this free teaching, learning, and technology magazine provides links to "Syllabus Top 40," "Syllabus Case Studies," and "The Syllabus Archives," as well as highlights from the current issue, and information about the annual Syllabus Conference. Recent gems published in this magazine include Roy Tennant's "Web Sites by Design" and Lillian Wehmeyer's "Teaching Online Search Techniques Your Students Can Use." Last update: 1998. Access: <http://www.syllabus.com/>.

Articles

• **"Integrating Information Literacy Into the Curriculum: How is your library measuring up?"** This article, written by Cerise Oberman, Bonnie Gratch Lindauer, and Betsy Wilson, appeared in the May 1998 issue of

C&RL News. It reports on a March 1998 American Association of Higher Education (AAHE) presentation that described information literacy programs in various stages of develop-

ment. The presenters urged institutions to assess their own state of information literacy by taking the unique "Information Literacy IQ (Institutional Quotient) Test" (<http://www.ala.org/acrl/nili/iqtest.html>), designed by Oberman and Wilson. Appended to the report is an annotated list of sites identified as "Best practices and models." Last update: No date. Access: <http://www.ala.org/acrl/nili/integrtg.html>.

• **"Information Literacy as a Liberal Art."** Written by Jeremy J. Shapiro and Shelley K. Hughes, this classic, thought-provoking article, which appeared in the March/April 1996

Educom Review, illustrates the "reach" of the phrase "information literacy." The authors describe seven kinds of information literacy from a strictly technological perspective. The article also illustrates the need to broaden views of information literacy beyond "technology-related literacy." Last update: No date. Access: <http://www.educause.edu/pub/er/review/reviewarticles/31231.html>.

Organizations and associations

• **ALA, ACRL Instruction Section (IS).** This site focuses on instruction issues and projects related to academic libraries, and includes information on section activities, publications, conferences, committees, awards, plus links to instruction-related sites. The IS Teaching Methods Committee provides an excellent list of "Evaluation criteria for good Web-based library instruction" (<http://www.bk.psu.edu/academic/library/istm/criteria.html>) as well as examples that meet these criteria. The IS ACRL/CNI "Internet Education Project" (<http://www.cwru.edu/affil/cni/base/acrlcni.html>) reviews and selects exemplary Internet education materials. Last update: September 1, 1998. Access: <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/is/>.

• **ALA Library Instruction Round Table (LIRT).** This site is geared to those in any type of library setting who are interested in instruction. It includes information on activities, publications, conferences, committees, and links to instruction-related sites, as well as annotated information about Web-based tutorials. This site is also notable for its annotated bibliographies of LIRT-selected top twenty instruction articles for each of the last three years. Last update: July 31, 1998. Access: <http://diogenes.baylor.edu/Library/LIRT/>.

• **LOEX Clearinghouse for Library Instruction.** Located at Eastern Michigan University Library and directed by Librarian Julia K. Nims, this nonprofit clearinghouse lends instructional materials in various formats to institutional members. The site provides links to information literacy sites, online tours and tutorials, and other instruction-related sites. It also includes information on the important and highly popular annual LOEX conference on library instruction. Last update: July 31, 1998. Access: <http://www.emich.edu/~lshirato/loex.html>.

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She identified the challenge as one of "... how we will move into this new environment, changing the rules and changing the very nature of what it means to be an academic library." She identified this new meaning in terms of the shifting role of the institution of higher education from that of sole provider of educational content to one of guidance to students in their efforts to assemble "... learning opportunities, available at a distance from a variety of institutions," into a coherent educational experience.

Professional development and continuing education

Peter Durey, university librarian emeritus at the University of Auckland, New Zealand, defined professional development as "... a program which encourages employees to develop their skills and capabilities on a continuing basis." He was clear in his view that such a program be well-planned, resulting from performance reviews and discussions with library staff. He suggested the use of local library re-

sources, expertise elsewhere in the university, and programs offered by external sources, and noted that such training and development is often available in the form of interactive video or via the Internet.

On the third and closing day of the conference, Beverly Lynch of UCLA presented a masterful summary of the various discussions that took place during each of the six theme sessions, highlighting and making reference to several significant papers that were included in each of the six themes.

By any measure, ICONMAL '98 must be considered a major success. The new library building at Peking University is stunning, and this conference, designed to celebrate the centennial of the university and to commemorate the opening of the building, was a most fitting effort. Zhu Qiang, was the primary individual responsible for what we in the United States call "local arrangements."

Zhu and his staff did a truly remarkable job, and their efforts showed clearly throughout the entire conduct of the conference. ■

"Checking out..." continued from p. 85

Checking out digital cameras naturally evolved from the ITC goal of focusing on Web publishing and multimedia. It's the next wave for instructional technology. Checking out digital cameras is easy and cheap and a great boost for library public relations due to its popularity. We highly recommend offering this successful service and welcome any questions regarding how to begin.

Notes

1. <http://libweb.uoregon.edu/scilib/slitc.html>.
2. Klassen, Tim. "Creating an X Window Terminal-Based Information Technology Center," *Reference Services Review* (Spring 1997): 25-29.
3. For example, fines accrue if the camera is overdue: \$2 for the first hour, \$.50 per hour after the first hour, with a maximum of \$20. The patron is responsible for the camera during check-out and is charged for damage or loss. The replacement value of the camera is \$800.
4. McClelland, Deke. "Midrange Digital Cameras," *Macworld* (April 1998): 38-39.
5. One person checked out cameras 11 times, the highest. ■

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• **ALA, ACRL Institute for Information Literacy (IIL, formerly NILI).** Formed in 1997 under Cerise Oberman's direction, the IIL aims to train instruction librarians, provide programming for library administrators on information literacy issues, and support ACRL and the National Forum on Information Literacy in various higher education initiatives.

This site provides information on IIL programs and links to related sites on information literacy. Of special interest is a page on the important upcoming IIL Immersion Program, a comprehensive four-and-a-half-day institute for instruction librarians to be held at SUNY Plattsburgh in July 1999. Last update: November 19, 1998. Access: <http://www.ala.org/acrl/nili/nilih.html>.

Notes

1. gopher://ala1.ala.org:70/00/alagophiv/50417007.document.
2. Loanne Snavely and Natasha Cooper. "The Information Literacy Debate," *Journal of Academic Librarianship*, Jan. 1997, V23(N1): 9-14, and Kasman, Joyce Valenza. "Information Literacy is More Than Computer Literacy," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 16 April 1998, sec. F3, column 2. ■