

Role of Libraries in Promoting Information Literacy

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ABSTRACT

In the paper focus on information literacy, how it has evolved from library user education and the aims of various information literacy programmes. Highlight that information literacy is a signal skill for lifelong and indicate the role of librarians in information literacy and identify some barriers to librarians effective involvement in and delivery of these programmes. Basically information literacy programmes are action oriented, while helping to solve the real life problems and making the correct decisions. In addition this paper also proposes to discuss the available information literacy models.

KEYWORDS: Literacy programmes, Services, Information and Communication Technologies

INTRODUCTION

The Twenty first century has been named the information Era, owing to the explosion of Information and the information sources. Information Literacy is the set of skills needed to find, retrieve, analyze, and use information. Traditionally, Literacy means the ability to read and write, But there seems to be various types of literacy. Such as audiovisual literacy, print literacy, computer literacy, media literacy, library literacy and information literacy etc. Insignificant and active literacy too focuses on making people aware to read and write in their day to day activities. Information literacy is quite different to the above. It is a combination of all these concepts but goes beyond them.

What is Information?

Information is a resource that has varied definitions according to the arrangement and media used to wrap up or move it, as well as the discipline that defines it. Case (200) provides a broader definition. Here the term is synonymous with:

- Encapsulated knowledge
- Packaged human experience
- A source that can provide a myriad of India
- A resource that takes different formats packaging, transfer media and varied methods of delivery.
- People: family, friends, tutors, fellow students
- Institutions, i.e. national health service professionals or help facilities.

The need for effective use of Information: Information has become a vital source for world economies and is certainly the basic component of education. Information is a vital element to technological and scientific change. It poses several challenges to individuals of all walks of life: students, workers and citizens of all types. The current information overload requires people to validate and assess information to verify its reliability. Information by itself does not make people information literate. Information is positively a:

- A vital element for creativity and innovation.
- A basic resource for learning and human thought
- A key resource in creating more knowledgeable citizens
- A factor that enables citizens to achieve better results in their academic lives, with regard to health and at work
- An important resources for national socio-economic development

What is Literacy?

The basic definitions of Literacy is "the condition of being literate" according to the Chambers English Dictionary (2003). This reference work, on the other hand, defines literate as " learned; able to read and write, having a competence in or with" In education parlance, "Basic Literacy" means the classic or traditional literacy of learning how to read, to write and to perform numeric calculation and operation; basic literacy in almost all societies are learned in basic and secondary formal education setting, primarily public or private schools, but sometimes basic literacy are learned at home or in community centers.

Other "Literacy" concepts related to information literacy. Information literacy is linked with other types of related literacy, but it should be differentiate from them, specially from information technology, media literacy, network literacy, digital literacy, and network or Interest literacy, "Computer Literacy" and "Media Literacy" (Bawden, 2001). These last two literacy are clearly defined by Horton (F.Horton, Jr.personal communication, December, 2004) in the following terms.

- ❖ **Computer Literacy:** The knowledge and skills essential to understand information and communication technologies(ICTs), including the hardware, the software, systems, networks(both local area networks and the Internet) and all of the other components of computer and telecommunications system.
- ❖ **Media Literacy:** The knowledge and skills necessary to understand all of the mediums and formal in which data, information and knowledge are created, stored, communicated and presented i.e. print newspaper and journals, magazines, radio, television broadcasts, cable, CD-ROM, DVD, mobile telephones, PDF text formats and JPEG format for photos and graphics.

Information Literacy Defined

Information literacy is a set of abilities requiring individuals to "recognize when information is needed and have the ability to situate, evaluate and use efficiently the needed information." Information literacy also is more and more important in the contemporary environment of rapid technological change and proliferating information resources. Because of the increasing difficulty of this environment, individuals are faced with varied, plentiful information choices in their educational studies, in the place of work and in their individual lives. Information is increasingly, Information comes to persons in unfiltered formats, raising questions about its genuineness, validity, and reliability.

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In addition, Information is available through multiple media, including graphical, aural, and textual, and these pose new challenges for individuals in evaluate and accepting it. The unsure quality and expanding quantity of Information pose large challenges for society. The Pure large quantity of Information will not in itself create a more informed population without a complementary group of abilities necessary to use information efficiently.

Information literacy forms the basis for lifelong learning. It is common to all disciplines, to all learning environment and to all levels of education. It enables learners to master content and extend their investigation, become more self-directed and assume greater control over their own learning. An information literate individual is able to:

- Determine the extent of information needed
- Access the needed information effectively and efficiently
- Evaluate information and its sources critically
- Incorporate selected information into one's knowledge base
- Use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose
- Understand the economic, legal and social issues surrounding the
- Use of Information and access and use information ethically and legally

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Seven Pillars of Information Literacy

In 1999, the Society of College, National and University Libraries (SCONUL) in the U.K. developed the Seven Pillars Model of Information Literacy. The first four pillars of the model focus on students' ability to locate and access information, while the remaining three pillars emphasize on the ability to understand and use information. Shows the descriptions of each pillar.

Pillar 1: Recognize information need knowing what is known, knowing what is unknown and identifying information gap.

Pillar 2: Distinguish ways of addressing gap knowing which information sources are more likely to satisfy the information need.

Pillar 3: Construct strategies for locating knowledge how to develop and refine an effective search strategy.

Pillar 4: Locate and access knowing to access information sources and search tools to access and retrieve information

Pillar 5: Compare and evaluate knowing how to assess the relevance and quality of the information retrieved

Pillar 6: Organize, apply and communicate knowing how to assimilate information from a variety of sources for the purpose of creating new knowledge.

Information Technology and Information Literacy

The growth of Computer networks and information services has already enabled learners at all levels to share resources, work together with one more and publish their results electronically. To use information sources effectively, we need both technology infrastructure and Information Literacy Infrastructure in place. Information Technology is a tool for writing papers, communicating with colleagues worldwide and exchange experiment, ideas

and programs internationally. As society colleges are considering distance learning and new technologies to their curriculum, ensuring students information literacy becomes vital.

Information Literacy and Life Long Learning

Both these concepts are interrelated as below:

- Largely self motivated and self directed
- These are self empowering
- These are self actuating

Library Actions that Contribute to Information Literacy

There are several terms that are part of or contribute to the information literacy(IL), concept. They each have their own semantic content in addition to difference characterized by the type of skill, level, the categories of learning, and instructional facilitating methods. Comprising many different concepts, IL has evolved beyond early library instruction emphasizes the location of library materials, another IL concepts focuses on Information use competencies. To reiterate, information competencies to become effective learners. Some of the IL related terms are (See Glossary for additional definitions):

- Information fluency Capability or mastering of information competencies.
- User education Global approach to teach information access to users
- Literary instruction focuses on library skills
- Bibliographic instruction User training on information search and retrieval
- Information competencies compound skill and goals of Information literacy
- Information skills focuses on Information abilities
- Development of Information skills process of facilitating information skills

The Role of the Library

The establishment of University-wide commitment to the development of information literacy skill and empowering our students with the concepts and strategies for building knowledge from information is a priority for the library.

The Library will provide:

- expert advice on integrating and embedding information literacy proficiencies in curriculum design
- leadership in the development of discipline based activities for information skills
- partnering in the formulation of authentic assessment tasks which address information literacy learning outcomes and behavior.

The Role of Library in Supporting Information Literacy

The library has a particularly important role to educate information literacy to students who require competency in searching for knowledge by themselves when they are doing their course assignments. Li(2006) explained the advantages of university libraries in this respect that the library has information sources ready for information literacy, and has personnel with expertise in information and the ability to manage information literacy. ACRL(2008) established three methods for university libraries to integrate information literacy, namely, (a) the design of teaching methods, program structures and evaluation; (b) human resources, i.e. the library has experienced

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personnel with expertise to educate students; and (c) acquiring teaching facilities continuous budget allocation and librarians' knowledge development. Fidzani (2010) information professionals recommended that the roles of libraries in information literacy education by means of the arrangement of information literacy activities for students, for example, orientation, teaching one-on-one searching methods at the reference service section, seminar, integration in various courses, teaching through website and teaching it as a curricular course.

Role of Librarians in Information Literacy

Information and Communication Technologies have changed the complete scenario in libraries. Now a day, library has become point of resource-based learning the role of librarian is changing radically with skills of education paradigms. The impact of moving from text based learning to resource based learning will involve heavier use of responsible for locating, acquiring, disseminating and tracking information resources of many types. It might include database searching, interlibrary loans, monitoring internet news groups or maintenance of a computerized library Information system. Libraries and Librarians play an important role in education of people for effective and efficient information use by teaching them information skills at all levels of education to enable to be in forced citizens of the country.

Barriers to Information Literacy Programmes

It may seem strange, given the compelling evidence supporting the need for information literacy skills, that such programmes, both non-curricular and curricular, are not more evident especially in institutions of higher education. In part this is because it requires an attitudinal change on the part of all stakeholders in higher education in particular- administration, academics, students and even librarians. One is tempted to wonder whether some librarians are loathe passing on the skills which they have in high order, fearing that they will be seen as redundant if they do so. Yet librarians, as practitioners par excellence in the field of information and knowledge, will always on the cutting edge of the management of the developing information and knowledge field, and thus will maintain and constantly enhance their leadership position.

A considerable barrier for librarians is the reluctance of many teachers to acknowledge that librarians have a legitimate educative role and that they, too, can be accomplished teachers. In addition, libraries need to develop or access spaces which are appropriate for communicating these skills. There is no doubting that when collaborative partnerships can be established with teacher's information literacy programmers are more likely to be assured the support necessary for them to become a vital part of the educative process.

CONCLUSIONS

In the Information age the concept of literacy needs to be expanded to embrace information literacy. The ability to view information in its widest context, to determine needs and then locate, evaluate, organize and apply it is key skills. Librarians are well placed to have a key role in information literacy promote as tutors and teachers of both non-curricular and curricular papers as well as providing knowledge of and access to the world of Information (not just the resources found in or through the library) and to apply high level evaluative skills to these resources.

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