

Information Literacy & Libraries & Internet Universality, 10 minutes, 10/25/2017
[Seventh Media and Information Literacy and Intercultural Dialogue \(MILID\) Conference](#)
[Global Media and Information Literacy Week 2017](#)

Media and Information Literacy in Critical Times: Re-imagining Ways of Learning and Information Environments

Parallel Session 1a

Special Session (UNESCO and the Caribbean School of Media and Communication (CARIMAC)): Multi-stakeholder Consultation on UNESCO project Defining Internet Indicators

I am so excited to be able to speak to the role that libraries can play in defining internet indicators. I am the only one here speaking to how libraries fit. In reading background materials and refreshing my understanding of the Internet Universality principles and its progress, I found myself wholeheartedly agreeing with the concepts and jotting down many notes about how libraries contribute and align. I am speaking of libraries in a holistic sense, academic, public, school, and special libraries.

- Strong libraries ease internet accessibility issues. Libraries provide free access to the internet to their communities, sometimes the only internet access that some users have.
- Libraries believe in the right to the freedom of information. Everyone should have access to the same material and content.
- Libraries support makerspaces and digital labs, they hold hack-a-thons and free coding classes. These make our communities into creators that contribute to open API development, open educational resources, and local, unique content.
- Libraries support digital preservation of cultural heritage and assets.
- Libraries strive to create user competencies through information literacy. We assist with creating responsible producers of content.
- Libraries reduce isolation and create community.
- IFLA facilitates the work of libraries on a global scale and is engaging in its own participatory, or multi-stakeholder, exercises to produce a vision.

I would like to pose several issues as indicators of progress or success for libraries to contribute to Internet Universality. I am thinking of these issues as what makes the internet human-centered and how libraries foster social and learning aspects. What human qualities do we need to encourage?

Is Engaging Critically with Information an indicator?

The Internet, libraries and information literacy go hand in hand. Libraries are crucial to an educated citizenry. We do this every single day. Libraries improve understanding and knowledge every single day.

Teaching information literacy has taken on a new urgency for me in this era of 'fake news'. Imparting information literacy effectively to my students (in my case) and our library communities is an ongoing process. As information professionals, we already have these skills and continually teach this in our communities.

Fake News and the spread of misinformation

We are tasked with destroying the meaning of this term. We didn't create the term or make it popular, it is catchy though, but we have to dissect it, understand it, and combat it.

In March of 2017, Tim Berners Lee wrote [a letter](#) to the Internet as the Web turned 28 years old; one main point was that "misinformation, or 'fake news', which is surprising, shocking, or designed to appeal to our biases can spread like wildfire".

The speed is staggering. Journalists struggle to keep up with verification and authenticity in an instantaneous digital social world.

Understanding digital political advertising

A second point from that Tim Berners Lee letter to us: "Political advertising online has rapidly become a sophisticated industry. The fact that most people get their information from just a few platforms and the increasing sophistication of algorithms drawing upon rich pools of personal data, means that political campaigns are now building individual adverts targeted directly at users."

We must make our users more sophisticated in understanding propaganda, information origin, and the spectrum of deliberate misinformation.

As efforts to mislead for gain grow more sophisticated, how do we respond?

Is Engagement with Information Literacy an indicator?: Understanding Threshold Concepts & Asking Critical Questions

The basis of many of these efforts for me are the current American Library Association's Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL) Threshold Concepts. They are flexible and thought provoking frames to work in when teaching information literacy.

- Authority Is Constructed and Contextual
- Information Creation as a Process
- Information Has Value
- Research as Inquiry
- Scholarship as Conversation
- Searching as Strategic Exploration

Lisa Janicke Hinchliffe's presentation in the June [Library 2.017 forum](#) on Digital Literacy and Fake News was excellent and made me think of not just the threshold concepts as important but the dispositions we need to cultivate in our students. She said they must habitually ask questions, be seekers of new knowledge, and critical thinkers. We must also do this ourselves.

Is Online Trust an indicator?

A [Pew Research Report](#) recently released, The Fate of Online Trust in the Next Decade, talks about online trust. "What will happen to online trust in the coming decade? Some expect the very nature of trust will change." This report focused on information as it relates to banking, personal identifiers, and transactions, but for me, it extends to news, scholarly information, and the pursuit of knowledge.

Is Exploration part of an indicator? : Examples of Varied and Deeper forms of engagement with users

Social Media Campaign #checkyourfacts

At my university we are devising ways to engage our students around evaluating information. We are starting a social media campaign around #checkyourfacts and awareness. We are following a model created by Virginia Commonwealth University last spring. We will regularly tweet relevant material, create student videos, have a forum discussion, and a session for instructors.

- Share the first thing that comes to mind when you hear 'fake news'.
- How do you check your facts?

Creating a 3-Credit Course

I am creating a 3-credit course to be offered by the library on Information, Critical Thinking, and Ethics. This will be a deep look for students at information production, dissemination, and ethics.

Is Fostering Curiosity an indicator? Changing Perception of our Users: Creators of Content, not just Consumers

We need to think of our users, students, or communities as creators of content not just consumers. Creative work not just analytic work. In higher education and in K-12, curriculum is turning to creating and making. Students work in groups and create digital content all the time in their personal lives. We need to encourage curiosity.

Are Responsibility & Conscious Modeling an indicator?

We need to model our best behavior online and we need to teach others how we do this. From the website [FirstDraft](#) author Claire Wardle: "We all play a crucial part in this ecosystem. Every time we passively accept information without double-checking, or share a post, image or video before we've verified it, we're adding to the noise and confusion. The ecosystem is now so polluted, we have to take responsibility for independently checking what we see online."

I pose these as questions to think about. Many libraries and IFLA are working hard in exploring these areas and others. Many of these are difficult to measure but good to consider as these indicators take shape.

My final words will be about Multi-Stakeholder Engagement.

Libraries continually consult with communities and users to organise the way that libraries provide information.

IFLA works with the Internet Governance Forum alongside many other NGOs and similar groups. IFLA is working closely with libraries to show how they can make a positive difference in the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

Multi-stakeholder governance is perhaps the most difficult element of the four principles, especially from the indicator point of view. The notion of multi-stakeholder governance itself, although referenced in WSIS documents, does not always mean the same to all people.

- It's important to reflect on why we see this as a priority - namely in order to ensure that all voices are heard in the way that the information environment is run, both today and into the future. This should act to counter any negative tendencies or imbalances.
- Organizations like IFLA have an interest in ensuring that the voices of NGOs, and of those working within the public sector to achieve the goals of a universal Internet, are heard. Subjective measures of whether each group feels that its voice is heard could serve a useful purpose here. So too will gauges of whether all stakeholders have the formal possibilities - through consultations, open debates and other means - to influence decision-making on questions relevant to Internet governance.
- This is particularly important for questions of media and information literacy. The variety of actors involved - librarians, teachers, academics, civil servants, NGOs and others, means that we need a way of showing whether discussions such as those taking place here, today, are actually being listened to.

To conclude:

Libraries contribute to many of the indicators tentatively being developed including Rights to Information; the right to cultural expression; open data; open access to information; access of women to internet technology, digital literacy, trust, public debate, and the relationship to the SDGs. I welcome our further discussion today and during this conference.