# Relevance of Information Literacy in Digital Environment

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**ABSTRACT:** *Electronic environmental impact on all sectors of social and economic life influenced the academic training too. Thus, it is required to introduce in training, indifferent of specialty disciplines, a course of information literacy to develop theoretical knowledge and practical skills concerning the construction, processing and communication of information. The paper try to analyze what kind of methods and resources must be used in information literacy instruction provided by an academic library. We try to demonstrate that the information literacy instruction is very important for the academic users because it demonstrated the importance of all kind of information (traditional or on line) and how different kind of strategy concepts and models could increase effectiveness in this area of professional practice.Methodology followed for the study is based on the documents available library including on internet. Library professionals need to be aware of using the skills involved in acquiring e-resources from a wide range of information resources including organization and proper dissemination to the users. Further, they require creating awareness among the users about the adaptability of new technologies, capability of information building etc.*

## 1. Introduction

In recent century information is growing at surprisingly fast speed in the society every person whether men or women, rich or poor, adult or child needs information for their work. If you have information at every step then only you can proceed in your life. In today's scenario information is compulsory. Information Literacy is the process of knowing when and why information is required, where to find it and how to evaluate, use and communicate it in an ethical way. It is the combination of all the skills that required for the effective and maximum use of information. Information literacy is one of such key competency essential in the present century. Information Literacy is the ability to gather, organize, filter and evaluate information and to form valid opinions based on the results. The information literacy has been used as collective term covering all or several of literacies viz. Computer

literacy, digital literacy, hyper literacy, information technology literacy, interactive literacy, multiple literacy, network literacy, oral literacy, internet literacy, reading literacy, water literacy and visual literacy etc. Here each of this literacy is necessary to understand specific process has special importance. The users who inculcate in themselves with new and updated methods obtain the quality of creating meaningful work. The whole concept of information literacy is to move from text-based learning to resource-based learning.

Information Literacy is defined as the skill to know the need of information including its identification, location so as to serve the users in an effectual way. Due to the availability of mammoth of literature in a versatile subject fields, it becomes essential to analyze the quality of information which can be used by the users for academic purpose.

According to Maughan the primary issues relating to information literacy are:

• Strong Commitment From The Institution/ Organization;

• Strong Obligation From The Library Administration;

• Proficiency In Teaching, Technology, And Assessment Among Library Staff;

• Faculty Who Will Partner With Librarians And Other Information-handling Professionals.

## 2. History of Information Literacy

The phrase "information literacy" first appeared in print in 1974 report by Paul G.Zurkowski, written on behalf of the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science. He used this phrase to describe the "techniques and skills" known by the information literate" for utilizing the wide range of information tools as well as primary sources in molding information solutions to their problems". In the information society, information and knowledge are the basic resources and access to them is a necessity. The central mission of higher education is to make an objective effort to develop lifelong learners. The never changing life style and fascinating changes that are taking place in all walks of life necessitate the incessant learning practice. Education in general and professional education in particular strives hard to ensure the enhancement of learner's intellectual abilities, reasoning and critical thinking power. It also endeavors to construct a framework for 'learning how to learn' and thus providing a foundation for continued growth indicating learner's role as informed citizens and members of the community. Effective execution of this objective calls for promoting information literacy.

### The Family of 21$^{st}$ Century Survival Literacies
The family of 21$^{st}$ Century "survival literacies" includes six categories:

(1) The Basic or Core functional literacy fluency (competencies) of reading, writing, orally and numeracy;

(2) Computer Literacy;

(3) Media Literacy;

(4) Distance Education and E-Learning;

(5) Cultural Literacy; and

(6) Information Literacy. The boundaries between the various members of this family overlap, but they should be seen as a closely-knit family.

For example, it has been pointed out by many experts that the common public perception is that a person if either "literate" or "illiterate," when the reality is that literacy encompasses a wide range of individual functionalities, each of which can be observed and measured on a scale of competency – beginner, intermediate and advanced. In this view, literacy is comprehensive in the sense that it includes many learn able skills, and positive attitudes and behaviors that impact every aspect of one's life. Moreover, as literacy permeates a family, a workplace, a classroom, or a place of social or religious gathering, it becomes a

"family affair" and "infects" all members of the family or gathering or community.

## 3. Potentiality of Information Literacy

Information Technology has brought drastic changes in the field of acquisition, organization, management and dissemination of information. The technological changes with tools have created a positive threat to adapt to the changing situation. Further, the users are also unable to cope-up with these modern technologies. The uncertain quality and expanding quantity of information pose major challenges and threats for the society. The recognition of rapid technological changes together with proliferation of information sources has initiated the shifting of instructions from library to information literacy. The users are not able to make out their information choice for pursuing academic studies due to escalating complexity of digital environment. Increasingly as information comes to users in unfiltered formats, the users raise questions about its authenticity, validity, and reliability. Further, information is available through multiple medias, including graphical, acoustic, and textual, and these posed a new challenges for the usersto evaluate and understand. Therefore, a competency standard for higher education as follows has been developed by ACRL. Following are some of the important components which precipitated to the development of information literacy.

• Information Explosion

• Advent of information and communication technologies(ICTs)

• Divergent and vast varieties of information sources

• Wide dispersal of information

• Birth of new discipline with new demands

• Unawareness of users to new technologies

• Lack of information capability building

• Technological changes

•  Participate citizenship

• Creation of new knowledge

• User empowerment

## 4. Global Scenario on Information Literacy

Information literacy scenario has become a global challenge. Many professional organizations and associations have taken this as a challenging task including the Librarians and Information Scientists. Following are some of the global platforms where information literacy has gained momentum in the digital environment.

1. The Community Services Group of the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionalshas a sub group called the Information Literacy Group. The Information Literacy Group aims to provide a forum across the UK for all sectors of the profession, which encourages debate and allows the exchange of knowledge in all aspects of information literacy.

2. The Society of College, National and University Libraries (SCONUL) has a Working Group on Information Literacy, whose remit is to take a lead role in the development of theory and practice in relation to information literacy (IL) and its role in the process of learning in further and higher education within the UK.

3. The Higher Education Academy Information and Computing Sciences (HEA ICS) ,UK subject centre is keen to support both academics and practitioners in developing students IT and information literacy skills. The HEA ICS runs a couple of workshops a year on information literacy. The American Library Association (ALA) supports the American Association of School Librarians

(AASL) and the American Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL) in the development of information literacy materials.

4. Australian and New Zealand libraries have created the Australian and New Zealand Institute for Information Literacy (ANZIIL). ANZIIL supports organizations, institutions and individuals in the promotion of information literacy and, in particular, the embedding of information literacy within the total educational process. The Institute identifies, facilitates, fosters and supports best practice in information literacy through: Professional Development; Promotion, Marketing and Advocacy; Research.

5. Information literacy interest group of Canadian Library Association has also put major concern on information literacy.

6. The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) have developed a Information Literacy Section the primary purpose of the Information Literacy Section is to foster international cooperation in the development of information skills education in all types of libraries.

7. The High-Level Colloquium on Information Literacy and Lifelong Learning held at the Bibliotheca Alexandrina on 6-9 November 2005 developed the Alexandria Proclamation on information literacy and lifelong learning . It declares that "Information Literacy and lifelong learning are the beacons of the Information Society, illuminating the courses to development, prosperity and freedom."

## 5. Conclusion

Information literacy which is a transformational process lies at the core of lifelong learning and it empowers people in all walks of life to obtain, evaluate, use and generate information effectively so to achieve their personal, social, occupational and educational goals. Further in a democratic setup, it is also a fundamental human right in a digital environment that promotes social inclusion of all nations. In the process, information literacy enables sharing of resources, knowledge more effectively with the help of technology. Information Literacy is undeniably an indispensable concept for the user empowerment in 21st century. It not only helps to empower the user but also act as lifelong learning for capacity building. Universally it requires to be promoted throughout the world so as to cope up with technology changes with the proliferation of knowledge. Library and information centers have a crucial role to collect organize and manage information for the users. User empowerment is another positive dimension in this regard. LIS professional has a crucial role to organize the scattered and unorganized information to provide the refined and tailored made information to the user. The librarian needs to develop user oriented collection development. Developing adequate collaboration and cooperation among the staffs, user and faculties for the successful of information literacy is one of the crucial functions of the librarian especially in a digital environment. He should know all the ways and mean toeffectively and smoothly transfer of information for the need of information society. The gap between user and librarian should be bridged so that user can feel free to clear his doubts to enrich his knowledge. From the aforesaid discussions it can be concluded that, information literacy is essential to promote optimum utilization of information resources both traditional and electronic including removal of all barriers for better access to electronic information resources. Therefore, practicing of information literacy both for the Libraries and Information Centers has become indispensable so as to coup with the emerging changing situations.

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