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## INFORMATION LITERACY: AN OVERVIEW OF STANDARDS, MODELS AND ROLE OF LIBRARIES

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**Abstract:**

*Information literacy is the set of abilities and knowledge that helps us to locate, evaluate, and use the information we need, as well as to filter out the information we don't need. The paper covers introduction, meaning and definitions, needs, types, standards, models and the information literacy in the environment of web 2.0 and it also covers the role played by the libraries in information literacy.*

**KEY WORDS:**

Information literacy, Information explosion, Standards of IL, Models of IL, Web 2.0

**INTRODUCTION:**

“The illiterate of the year 2000 will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn.”

Alvin Toffler

In the information age, information is the backbone of the society; because it facilitates in development of every field of life. In the world of information explosion there is an urgency to make the society aware of overflow of information, so that instead of sinking in the cascade of information, one may evaluate and use the information effectively. Only the information literacy can play a vital role to achieve this goal. Because, it is defined that information literacy is an individual's ability to:

recognize a need for information;  
identify and locate appropriate information sources;  
know how to gain access to the information contained in those sources;  
evaluate the quality of information obtained;  
organize the information; and  
use the information effectively (Doyle, 1992).

The present information era demands that every people of the society to become information literate which means that one should not only be able to when information is needed but also be able to identify, locate, evaluate and use the information effectively in decision-making and achieve different goals. It is the information literacy that guides the people in the present context of information explosion and related uncertainties about its authenticity, validity, and reliability.

**INFORMATION**

The word information is derived from Latin word informare which means "give form to".

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Information is a sequence of symbols that carries a message, a set of items in which meaning is conveyed, or a specified arrangement of complex structures that conveys a message to a receiver. Information does not exist on its own. It is contained within something and is coded. Information can be coded in different forms, i.e., a written sentence on a piece of paper or on a computer disk. Information has no mass. It can be transferred, conveyed as a picture, sight, sound, an idea, spoken word, mathematical equation, etc. For information to exist, there must be a sender and a receiver (CARM, 2014). Information is the data that has given shape. It may be considered as processed data. Thus, information is data plus meaning, which has to be a result of human action (Seetharama, 1999).

### **LITERACY**

Literacy involves the ability to use language in its written form: a literate person is able to read, write and understand his or her native language and expresses a simple thought in writing (Bowden, 2001). Literacy is measured by the Govt. of India, in the ability to read 40 words per minute, write 20 words per minute and do 2 digits arithmetic (India, 2008). More than the ability to read; write and do arithmetic. It comprises other skills need for an individual's full autonomy and capacity to function effectively in a given society. It can range from reading instructions for fertilizers, or medical prescriptions, knowing which bus to catch, keeping accounts for a small business or operating a computer (UNESCO, 2002).

### **INFORMATION LITERACY**

Paul G. Zurkowski (1974, p. 6) first used the term information literacy to describe the techniques and skills necessary to be able to utilize "a wide range of information tools as well as primary sources". Zurkowski's definition of information literacy also included the ability to measure information value, to "mold information to [meet] needs" and to create solutions to problems. According to Paul Zurkowski first defined information literacy in 1970s as, people trained in the application of information resources to their work can be called information literacy. Information literacy is an understanding and set of abilities enabling individuals to recognize when information is needed and have the capacity to locate, evaluate and use effectively the need information. Information literacy can be defined as the ability to know, to be able to identify locate and evaluate the information sources. In other words it is the ability to access, process and use information effectively (Donrer and Gorman, 2006). Information literacy is a set of abilities requiring individuals to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the need information (ACRL, 2000). Information literacy is a process of lifelong self-education that can be fostered by preparing students to handle in formation effectively in any situation (Ruess, 1994).

### **NEED OF INFORMATION LITERACY**

We are living in the information society and information is the fundamental requirement as food, air, and water in the present modern era. If the information is not used in the particular way, it has no significance. So, users have to be information literate to effectively use the information. The fundamental goal of information literacy is to develop critical users of information. Information literacy is considered as a powerful weapon for life-long learning. It is common to all disciplines, to all learning environments, and to all levels of education. The need of information literacy may be essential due to following reasons:

Rapid increase in the stream of information due to information revolution;  
Advent of information and communication technologies;  
Vast verity of information sources;  
Changing shape of libraries;  
Wide dispersal of information;  
Increase in number of users, and  
Research on complex and interdisciplinary topics (Jayaprakash and Gupta, 2005).

### **TYPES OF INFORMATION LITERACY**

**Information literacy includes a range of literacy which is as follow:**

Visual Literacy: It is the ability to understand, use and express using images. It is divided into three parts as visual learning, visual thinking, and visual communication.

Media Literacy: It requires a person to understand, produce, and negotiate meanings in a culture made up of

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powerful images, words and sounds. A media literate person can decode evaluate, analyze and produce both print and electronic media (McClure, 1993). Thus, it is the ability to access, analyze and produce information in television, motion picture, radio, newspapers etc.

Network Literacy: It is the ability to find, obtain and use information in networked environment like World Wide Web. It is closely related to computer literacy.

Computer Literacy: Computer literacy is usually associated with technological know-how to manipulate computer hardware and software. Computer literacy is the ability to understand and use computers (Della, 1995). Thus, it contains the skills to understand and operate computer and its software to complete practical tasks.

Library Literacy: Gilton (1994) regards library literacy not as the presence or absence of the skills, but as progressive stages...the library literate can follow a systematic path or search strategy to locate text and evaluate the relevance of the information.

Digital Literacy: Digital literacy is the ability to appropriate the potential of ICT to support innovation in industrial, business and creative process. Learners need to gain the confidence, skills, and discrimination to adopt ICT in appropriate ways. Digital literacy seen as a 'life-skill' in the same way as literacy and numeracy (Japan, Ministry of Education, 2003).

ICT Literacy: ICT literacy is the ability to appropriately use digital technology, communication tools, and/or networks to solve information problem in order to function in an information society. This includes having the ability to use technology as a tool to research, organize and communicate information and having a fundamental understanding of the ethical/legal issues surround accessing and using information (Katz et al., 2004)

Research Literacy: Research literacy is the ability to locate, understand and critically evaluate research evidence for application in professional practice. It is also considered the ability to understand and use information technology tools to carry out research, including the use of discipline-related software and online resources (Siwach, 2013).

### STANDARDS OF INFORMATION LITERACY

IL standards and instructions provide behavioural descriptors to guide curriculum design and evaluation of student learning. The IL standards include three basic components: access, evaluation and use of information. These core goals are found in most of the standards created by library associations, such as the relevant contributions of AASL, ACRL, SCOUNL and the Australian and New Zealand Institute for IL, followed by the work of other countries, like Mexico, and individual educators (B. Ramesh Babu, 2008).

#### IFLA IL STANDARDS

The IFLA IL standards are based on these international experiences and contributions. The IFLA standards 7, 8 are grouped under the three basic IL components.

##### Access

The user access information effectively and efficiently.

Definition and articulation of the information need:  
Location of information

##### Evaluation

The user evaluates information critically and competently.

Assessment of information:  
Organisation of information:

##### Use

The user applies/uses information accurately and creatively.

Use of information:  
Communication and ethical use of information:

**STANDARDS AND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (ACRL)**

**Standard One**

The information literate student determines the nature and extent of the information needed.

**Performance Indicators:**

1. The information literate student defines and articulates the need for information.
2. The information literate student identifies a variety of types and formats of potential sources for information.
3. The information literate student considers the costs and benefits of acquiring the needed information.
4. The information literate student re-evaluates the nature and extent of the information need.

**Standard Two**

The information literate student accesses needed information effectively and efficiently.

**Performance Indicators:**

1. The information literate student selects the most appropriate investigative methods or information retrieval systems for accessing the needed information.
2. The information literate student constructs and implements effectively-designed search strategies.
3. The information literate student retrieves information online or in person using a variety of methods.
4. The information literate student refines the search strategy if necessary.
5. The information literate student extracts, records, and manages the information and its sources.

**Standard Three**

The information literate student evaluates information and its sources critically and incorporates selected information into his or her knowledge base and value system.

**Performance Indicators:**

1. The information literate student summarizes the main ideas to be extracted from the information gathered.
2. The information literate student articulates and applies initial criteria for evaluating both the information and its sources.
3. The information literate student synthesizes main ideas to construct new concepts.
4. The information literate student compares new knowledge with prior knowledge to determine the value added, contradictions, or other unique characteristics of the information.
5. The information literate student determines whether the new knowledge has an impact on the individual's value system and takes steps to reconcile differences.
6. The information literate student validates understanding and interpretation of the information through discourse with other individuals, subject-area experts, and/or practitioners.
7. The information literate student determines whether the initial query should be revised.

**Standard Four**

The information literate student, individually or as a member of a group, uses information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose.

**Performance Indicators:**

1. The information literate student applies new and prior information to the planning and creation of a particular product or performance.
2. The information literate student revises the development process for the product or performance.
3. The information literate student communicates the product or performance effectively to others.

**Standard Five**

The information literate student understands many of the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information and accesses and uses information ethically and legally.

**Performance Indicators:**

- 1.The information literate student understands many of the ethical, legal and socio-economic issues surrounding information and information technology.
- 2.The information literate student follows laws, regulations, institutional policies, and etiquette related to the access and use of information resources.
- 3.The information literate student acknowledges the use of information sources in communicating the product or performance.

**MODELS OF INFORMATION LITERACY**

The information scientists have invented different models to achieve the information literacy goals. These models help students and teachers to reach the ultimate goal of the education, with a specific guided plan. Several such popular models are given below.

**Kuhlthaus Model**

The information search process (ISP) is a linear and six-stage process of information seeking behaviour in library and information science. The ISP was first suggested by Carol Kuhlthau in 1991. These six stages are the Initiation, Selection, Exploration, Formulation, Collection, and Search closure.

**Big 6 Eisenberg/Berkowitz (1987)**

The Big6 is a process model for information problem-solving. It was developed by Mike Eisenberg and Bob Berkowitz and is the most widely known and widely used approach to teaching information and technology skills in the world. It is used in thousands of K-12 schools, higher education institutions, and corporate and adult training programs and is applicable whenever people need and use information. It consists the stages as:

Task definition, Information seeking strategies, Location & access, Use of information, Synthesis, Evaluation.

**The PLUS model-Herring**

This model of the information skills process is called the PLUS model and seeks to incorporate the key elements of previous models while adding emphasis on thinking skills and self evaluation. PLUS incorporates the elements of Purpose, Location, Use and Self-evaluation.

**Empowering 8- NILIS (2004)**

Empowering 8 is an information literacy model that was a by-product of two workshops: the first in Colombo, Sri Lanka in November 2004 and the second in Patiala, India in November 2005. Ten countries participated in the workshops: Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Maldives, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam. Empowering 8 uses the problem-solving approach for resource-based learning. Information literacy skills embedded in Empowering 8 are the ability to: Identify, Explore, Select, Organize, Create, Present, Assess, Apply.

**SCONUL**

In 1999, The SCONUL Working Group on Information Literacy published “Information skills in higher education: a SCONUL position paper” (SCONUL, 1999), introducing the Seven Pillars of Information Skills model. Since then, the model has been adopted by librarians and teachers around the world as a means of helping them to deliver information skills to their learners (Information literacy, 2014).

1. recognise a need for information
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2. distinguish ways of addressing gap
3. construct strategies for locating
4. locate and access
5. compare and evaluate
6. organise, apply and communicate
7. synthesise and create

### The 8 Ws

The 8 Ws Model was developed by Annette Lamb in the early 1990s. It includes the following stages: Watching (Exploring), Wondering (Questioning), Webbing (Searching), Wiggling (Evaluating), Weaving (Synthesizing), Wrapping (Creating), Waving (Communicating), Wishing (Assessing).

### Research Cycle

It is developed by Jamie McKenzie. This model gives very strong focus upon essential questions and subsidiary question early in the process. The cycle consists: Questioning, Planning, Gathering, Storing, Synthesizing, Evaluating, and Reporting.

### ROLE OF LIBRARIES IN INFORMATION LITERACY

Information & communication technologies have totally changed the present scenario of information. Now-a-days libraries are playing a major role in resource based learning and the roles of librarians are also changing drastically with shift of education paradigms. The core responsibility of librarians is to locate, acquire, disseminate and track the information. Database searching, interlibrary loans, monitoring internet newsgroups and the maintenance of computerized library system might be including in the responsibilities of librarians. To perform all these tasks, there is a need of managerial expertise and information literacy. Each and every person needs to be literate for productive information use and to achieve this target, libraries or librarians are playing the most important role. Now, the aim of modern libraries is to establish the free flow of information, to access of information on time, and to maximize the use of information across the world. Modern libraries are trying to make the users independent to find, obtain, evaluate, and use the information effectively. In this information society, libraries help the users in decision-making for different purposes. They are changing their conventional user education program into modern literacy program so as to make aware the users about the authentic, valid, and reliable information. The main purpose of libraries is to give the right information at the right time to the users and to fulfil this goal information literacy helps the users to investigate, access, and apply the information in effective manners. It is the fact that libraries are service-oriented; they serve their user and fulfil their needs of information. Thus, libraries should organize appropriate literacy program to make the users information literate. Libraries should support the information literacy program as their main role. Information literacy program should have larger scope from the traditional ability of read and write to the ability of investigating, obtaining, and using the information in this networked environment so as to make the users able to develop their skills through meaningful learning.

### INFORMATION LITERACY & WEB 2.0

The ability to rework a variety of media to create something new and unique has the potential to open up new possibilities for how technology can be used as educational tools. Web 2.0 is currently being used by libraries for library access, instruction, marketing, and reference services (Casey, 2005, October 21, Casey and Savastinuk, 2006, Cohen, 2007 and Godwin, 2009). Luo (2010) survey of the use of Web 2.0 tools in information literacy instruction found that 84% of librarians evaluated used these tools to facilitate the delivery of course content to students. Web 2.0 technologies mentioned in the survey included blogs, wikis, social bookmarking sites, and YouTube. These tools were employed to help students understand the information literacy concepts of information evaluation, information organization, and copyright. Social sharing sites like Flickr, PhotoBucket, and YouTube have also had some success as tools for information literacy instruction. Maggio et al. (2009) used social tagging in a biomedical information course to teach students about controlled vocabulary and Medical Subject Headings. Bussert, Brown, and Armstrong (2008) used Flickr in an information literacy session about databases organization. The majority of students in the study agreed that using Flickr helped them better understand databases and keywords. The students also said they enjoyed the visual approach to learning what the activity offered (Cited as in the Magunson,



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Marta L., 2013). Thus, there are a number of Web 2.0 tools as wikis, blogs, YouTube, Flickr etc. that help the users to understand the concept of information literacy. All these tools help the users to research their goal of finding, obtaining, evaluating and using the information in effective ways.

### CONCLUSION

Information literacy is a key component in the information age. It becomes an essential skill in this modern era of information explosion. Today, the information seeker is overwhelmed by the web-based environment and the following line by Coleridge becomes very relevant:

#### **Water water everywhere, but not a drop to drink**

So, we have to be information literate so that we can locate, analyze and use the information in a better and efficient manner. If we are not information literate, we have all the information nearby but we cannot judge that what is the source, which is relevant, and what is the use of the information. To use information meaningfully, information skills are important. Promoting information literacy skills is increasingly important as it is an essential element and key characteristics of lifelong learning. Information literacy models have been designed to optimize the use of resources, services of the library. Many more concepts are developing from time to time on electronic resources, therefore there is need to conduct information literacy programmes at regular intervals for the benefit of users. The library and information professionals have a vital role to play in this context. They have to play the role of facilitator between the information and the person in need for that information. A faculty-librarian collaboration can give an impetus to the information literacy skills which will become a necessity in the near future.

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