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Book Review

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Chan, L. et al 2002. *Budapest Open Access Initiative*. New York: Open Society Institute. Available at: <http://www.soros.org/openaccess/read.shtml> [Retrieved 22 January 2007].

Huvila, I. 2012. *Information services and digital literacy: in search of the boundaries of knowing*. Oxford: Chandos. 191 pp. ISBN 9781843346838. £47.50. Pbk.

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This is a well-researched and well presented book which will be of most interest to students and academics in the areas of information and digital literacy. It is an excellent text for those wishing to research the history and theories of digital literacy. It is largely a philosophical book, as reflected by the second half of the book's title, *In search of the boundaries of knowing*, and it investigates with relish, theories of information and digital literacy.

The book's title, *Information services and digital literacy*, may attract people who are looking for tips in introducing digital literacy within libraries. This is probably not the best book for that sort of support although it certainly provides an in-depth analysis of the subject. Many of the chapters have appeared as academic articles and this is evident in the thoroughness of the research. There are often citations on every line (see p.20 for instance) and a 35-page bibliography. The book discusses usability, the influences of technology and the intersections between information seeking behavior and access to information.

Huvila lays out the central hypothesis of the book:

'The fundamental problem of informing and being informed in the age of the social web and the culture of participation is that we don't know the premise of how we know, and how the ways of interacting with information affect our pursuits and their outcomes.' (p.2)

He goes on to examine theories of knowledge and digital literacy and draws on works from, amongst many others, Durkheim, Heidegger and Schumpeter. This will be of value to those undertaking research in this area. I wondered though, if the fact that the book brings together previously published articles about information and digital literacy means that the book sometimes contains more detail than is required. One section offers a 'brief history of the internet' for instance (pp.37-38) whilst another provides a discussion on the history of personal computers (p.41). Interesting though this may be, I felt that some of the historical detail was possibly extraneous and could have been edited out. However, I think as an addition to research on this subject, Huvila provides a very thorough and interesting study.

Huvila discusses the use of social media in digital literacy. For instance, the recent use of crowdsourcing in analysing photographs from Mars (p.57) is given as demonstration of the value of such work, as are collaborations of 'talko' and the 'broadcast yourselfism' of Wikipedia, Flickr and other cloud resources. There are also sections investigating the nature of users and new users, which, whilst largely aimed at an academic audience, may provide some ideas, or at least a theoretical platform, to those seeking to recruit new users to information and digital resources in their own libraries. Huvila references digital literacy reports such as *Digital Britain* (2009) and *A Digital Agenda for Europe* (2010) and disputes the easy categorisation of individuals into 'digital natives' and other groups (p.97). He also outlines the role of information services as a boundary to digital literacy, stating bluntly that:

'There is very little point in trying to force people into libraries, to inform them how poorly they are doing, or even at a general level to acclaim libraries as wonderful, if people are happy with their lives without visiting them.' (p.132).

As may be discerned, this is a text of more interest to academics and to students of information and digital literacy rather than to those seeking practical direction or tips on formulating digital literacy programmes or training sessions.

This book will be useful for UK students, I think, in that it provides a less US/UK-centric bias in its focus and citations (Huvila is a senior lecturer in Information Studies at Åbo Akademi University in Finland, and an associate professor and research associate at Uppsala University in Sweden). It provides many original viewpoints on digital literacy and the boundaries of information and knowing and is obviously the product of much committed research.