

# Journal of Information Literacy

ISSN 1750-5968

Volume 16 Issue 2

December 2022

## Conference report

Herm, K. 2022. LOEX 2022: Exploring information evaluation and algorithmic literacy. *Journal of Information Literacy*, 16(2), pp. 80–82.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.11645/16.2.3235>



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/).

**Copyright for the article content resides with the authors, and copyright for the publication layout resides with the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals, Information Literacy Group. These Copyright holders have agreed that this article should be available on Open Access and licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution ShareAlike licence.**

"By 'open access' to this literature, we mean its free availability on the public internet, permitting any users to read, download, copy, distribute, print, search, or link to the full texts of these articles, crawl them for indexing, pass them as data to software, or use them for any other lawful purpose, without financial, legal, or technical barriers other than those inseparable from gaining access to the internet itself. The only constraint on reproduction and distribution, and the only role for copyright in this domain, should be to give authors control over the integrity of their work and the right to be properly acknowledged and cited."

Chan, L. et al. 2002. Budapest Open Access Initiative. New York: Open Society Institute. Available at: <http://www.soros.org/openaccess/read.shtml> [Accessed: 18 November 2015]

# LOEX 2022: Exploring information evaluation and algorithmic literacy

**Kelli Herm, Instruction Librarian, Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI). Email: [hermk@iu.edu](mailto:hermk@iu.edu). ORCID: [0000-0002-3178-2864](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3178-2864)**

LOEX (previously known as Library Orientation Exchange) took place in my home state of Michigan this year, as it does every other year, which is part of the reason I decided to attend, for the third time since 2012. My last visit to LOEX came in Fall 2015, for the Fall Focus conference, at the same location as this year, the Ann Arbor Marriott Ypsilanti at Eagle Crest. At first, I thought that LOEX started some 20 years ago, only to discover it was 50 years ago!

This year felt like a reunion as I had the chance to reconnect with colleagues I previously worked with at Lansing Community College and Tallahassee Community College, and I met a few new folks also! Two members of the LOEX planning committee and I also attended University of Michigan School of Information together. So, LOEX 2022 really was a homecoming, as much as a fabulous conference!

I looked forward to Mike Caulfield's plenary session the most, as I previously saw him speak virtually at the Georgia International Conference on Information Literacy on March 31, 2022. From what I learned, LOEX 2022 was either his first, or one of his first in-person speaking events since the Covid-19 pandemic began. Revered as a celebrity of sorts in the library world, Mike demonstrated how to put his SIFT method of information evaluation to practice by examining recent social media post images, videos, and news articles. He said that the "object of personal fact check is not the representation, but our reaction to it...reaction is our guide". Mike spoke of compellingness—why we are reacting to this thing and not another. We need to question our reactions, to decide what is important about what we are seeing and what is not, and to learn about the context of what we are seeing before we decide if our gut reaction to it was appropriate.

Instead of asking for Mike's autograph, as I had contemplated doing, I chatted with a colleague and finalised which of the first six breakout sessions to attend. As previous attendees at LOEX commented, deciding which session out of many appetising ones to view each hour proves most difficult! I attended a variety of sessions, but one topic I wanted to learn more about was algorithmic literacy, after attending the keynote speech and a breakout session related to this theme at the Information Literacy Summit on April 29, 2022.

So, I joined Alexandria Chisholm's session, *The building blocks of personalization: Breaking down algorithms & the attention economy*. In this interactive experience, Alexandria shared a lesson plan and handouts from workshops she presents on attention autonomy and exploring personalisation algorithms at Penn State Berks. Participants discussed questions related to the social media platform they reviewed and what they learned about the recommender systems. I learned more about what the algorithms we use on a daily basis are and what they are designed to do. They collect our data, using metrics such as likes and retweets, to send us push notifications with information they think we would like in order to grab our attention. She shared some helpful attention autonomy tools such as search engines that won't track you and browser extensions which hide the metrics from some social media platforms. Read more about Alexandria's First Year Seminar Workshop Series in her libguide, listed at the end.

Immediately following this session, the title: *Misinformation, algorithms, and privacy: Helping students situate information literacy issues within wider social, cultural, political, and*

*technological contexts* caught my eye, so I proceeded to Auditorium 1. In their fast-paced session, Elizabeth Ellis, Meghan Webb, and Amanda Kaufman of Wake Forest University, detailed the important broad information contexts they teach students, under the umbrellas of Social/Cultural, Historical, Economic, Political, and Technological. They broke down each of these broad categories into subcategories and gave examples for each. Some of the new things I learned about in their presentation were the different ways of knowing, in relation to the 'authority is constructed and contextual frame' of the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) Framework, and surveillance capitalism, which came up in the previous session too, since it relates to algorithmic literacy. Information disorder is another new term I learned from this session, as it relates to the spread of mis and dis information. There was a lot of information packed into this presentation, so I am happy that the presenters shared their slides so I could review them again. They also shared their exploring search engine personalisation activity, and additional resources such as books, articles, and videos, too.

One of the poster presentations also covered the concept of algorithmic literacy. Though I did not have a chance to view Sarah Appedu and Melissa Ocepek of University of Illinois' poster, *It makes me feel weird: Student conceptions of "the algorithm" live*, I picked up one of their handouts which included a QR code to their poster and materials. Sarah and Melissa's poster illustrated the methodology and results of their interviews with 12 University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) undergraduate students, asking them about websites and apps they use both for school and leisure, their search process, and awareness of algorithms such as Google's. Sarah and Melissa found that "only 3 out of the 12 participants explicitly used the word 'algorithm' before it was introduced by the researcher." But students did notice the personalisation of the apps they are using and found it to be rather creepy. "While they may lack technical vocabulary, students' lived experiences reflect expertise in the workings of algorithms that needs to be taken seriously to bridge the gap between their implicit and explicit use of the word 'algorithm'." The top three apps students use most actively included: Instagram (all 12 participants), Snapchat (8), and TikTok (7).

I wish I had room to write about every breakout session I attended, but I'll just briefly list a few other notable ones:

- [\*Hearing the silenced voices: White supremacy culture & the CRAAP test\*](#) by Ayanna Gaines (Woodbury University)
- [\*Choose your own research adventure: Using Design Thinking to build an online tutorial focusing on Research as Inquiry\*](#) by Stacy Brinkman and Samantha Hilton (University of California, Irvine)
- [\*When all you have is a hammer, everything looks like a libguide: Strengths, limitations, and opportunities of the teaching tool\*](#) by Urszula Lechtenberg (University of Pittsburgh) and Helene Gold (New College of Florida)
- [\*What's your research personality? A new way of engaging students in resources and service discovery through a homegrown quiz app\*](#) by Veronica Bielat and Troy Walker (Wayne State University)

In addition to the breakout sessions and some of the posters, I also attended all four lunchtime lightning talks, which I also recommend. Here is a list of the other session descriptions and resources mentioned above:

- [Mike Caulfield's Plenary Session description](#)
- [\*The building blocks of personalization: Breaking down algorithms & the attention economy\*](#)
- [#ForYou: Algorithms & the Attention Economy Libguide.](#)
- [\*Misinformation, algorithms, and privacy: Helping students situate Information Literacy issues within wider social, cultural, political, and technological contexts\*](#)

- [Breakout Session Materials](#)
- [It makes me feel weird: Student conceptions of “the algorithm”](#)
- [Lightning Talks](#)

When a conference like LOEX 2022 comes to a close and the magic floats away, it’s like the end of a great movie, concert, or other enjoyable experience such as these. As I left the Eagle Crest Marriott and drove away from Ypsilanti, this song and words came into my head which I dedicate to the conference co-chairs, committee members, and director:

“Now I’ve had the time of my life  
No, I never felt like this before  
Yes I swear, it’s the truth  
And I owe it all to you”.

((I’ve Had) *The Time Of My Life*, Bill Medley and Jennifer Warnes).