

Journal of Information Literacy

ISSN 1750-5968

Volume 8 Issue 2

December 2014

Article

Goldstein, S. 2014. InformAll – information literacy for all. *Journal of Information Literacy*, 8(2), pp. 165-166.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.11645/8.2.1956>

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.

“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> [Retrieved 22 January 2007].

InformAll – information literacy for all

Stéphane Goldstein, Business Manager and Research Consultant, Research Information Network. Email: stephanegoldstein@researchinfonet.org

Introduction

In June 2013, the *Journal of Information Literacy* (JIL) carried a news item setting out the rationale and initial activities of the Research Information and Digital Literacies Coalition (RIDLCs). This initiative has made good progress since then, and last summer it was renamed InformAll. The broad aim remains the same: to provide a collaborative, multi-agency focus for promoting the relevance, importance and benefits of information literacy (IL), bringing together players within and beyond the library world. But instead of RIDLCs' initial focus on information as a component of the higher education (HE) research process, InformAll seeks to broaden its scope to address information knowhow and skills as they apply to individuals beyond education and throughout their lives.

Focus on employment

In this vein, 2014 has been a busy year for InformAll. A second tranche of funding from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) has enabled the implementation of a programme with a strong focus on the relevance of IL at the interface between HE and employment. Recognising that, in a knowledge-based economy, IL is fundamentally important as a set of attributes that can be transferred and adapted beyond HE, InformAll investigated how IL is understood and perceived by a range of relevant sectors: careers advisers, professional and accreditation bodies, employers and employers' organisations, trade unions and specialist bodies such as the National Centre for Universities and Business. This project culminated in a report summarising and analysing the views derived from a cross-section of these players (Goldstein 2014); and this has been complemented with an annotated bibliography describing the evidence on IL as it is understood and interpreted in the workplace (Williams et al. 2014).

This empirical work is serving as a basis for raising awareness of IL in sectors where it has not been readily recognised as a defined set of attributes. InformAll, in partnership with the Chartered Institute of Information and Library Professionals (CILIP) and others, is looking to generate a dialogue with those with an interest in employment, employability and professional development. The ground is being laid for a roundtable, early in 2015, to start exploring the benefits of further consideration of the relevance of IL to policies and practices; and what might be done, practically, to help raise the profile of IL – however it is termed – within organisational cultures. This is a long-term undertaking but pursuing this line could provide genuine opportunities to take IL beyond its traditional library and academic bases, while providing opportunities for organisations to better understand the place of information in their respective environments; to steward their information resources; to improve their information practices; and to nurture their information landscapes. The genuine interest expressed in InformAll's work at the recent European Conference on Information Literacy (ECIL); the promotion of employability as a main theme of LILAC 2015; and not least the developing corpus of academic literature on IL and employment, all point to the potential of working in this area. And of course, getting IL better recognised as a factor in employment could help bringing it to the attention of national and international policymakers.

Developing for the future

All the while, InformAll is transforming itself from a loose network into a membership-based organisation with a stronger sense of purpose, a better-defined identity and the potential to become an initiative that gradually develops a cogent service offer. A distinct web presence

has been set out, and promotional material has been produced. At present, InformAll provides an environment where individuals and organisations with varied perspectives can interact, share views and expertise and work jointly on projects aimed at promoting IL. Beyond this, there is the potential to develop specific services destined to meet the needs of different communities. For instance, InformAll has further developed its criteria for the describing, reviewing and evaluating of IL training interventions (see Resources); at the suggestion of the Society of College, National and University Libraries (SCONUL); a summary version has been produced, and InformAll is now looking at transforming the document into an online interactive resource. Ultimately, this could serve as a basis for benchmarking and accreditation. Other service offerings might be envisaged, tapping into the expertise and networking capacity of InformAll members, and addressing areas where collaboratively-produced resources might help address real needs.

The capacity for InformAll to develop further depends largely on the extent to which it can demonstrate that it has the capacity to add value – but also, crucially, on persuading prospective funders that it has a viable role to play. Its strengths are its capacity to draw in players from different constituencies and to act as a facilitator that brings together these diverse interests. It has the potential to extend its reach across a wide variety of sectors, and beyond the UK too. Most of all, it is an evolving, collective endeavour, reflecting the ideas and aspirations of its members, with plenty of scope for shaping its agenda and influencing the way in which it develops.

Resources

More information is available from the InformAll website: <http://www.informall.org.uk>

RIDLs criteria available at: <http://www.researchinfonet.org/infolit/ridls/ridls-criteria/>

References

Goldstein, S. 2014. *Transferring information know-how: Information literacy at the interface between higher education and employment*. Research Information Network / InformAll. Available at: <http://www.researchinfonet.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Report-on-transferability-of-IL-beyond-academia-FINAL.pdf> [Accessed 30 November 2014].

Williams, D. et al. 2014. *Information Literacy in the Workplace: an annotated bibliography*. Robert Gordon University / InformAll. Available at: <http://www.researchinfonet.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Workplace-IL-annotated-bibliography.pdf><http://www.researchinfonet.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Workplace-IL-annotated-bibliography.pdf> [Accessed 30 November 2014].