

## Editorial

# Happy anniversary! A JIL special issue to mark fifty years of information literacy

<http://dx.doi.org/10.11645/18.1.611>

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## Anniversary of IL special issue 2024

When I first came up with the idea for a Special 50th anniversary Issue of JIL, I thought this would be a relatively fun and straightforward way to celebrate a milestone achievement. My jauntily written Call for Papers (CfP) asked authors to look at the big information literacy (IL) picture—to take stock of the last fifty years but also to consider the field's present form and to look to the future. I envisaged that contributors would challenge readers on what we have learnt about IL and research, but also consider how our knowledge might impact on learning over the next fifty years. Fourteen months later, and my editorial hat is not quite so perky—while the authors have responded admirably to the challenge that I set for them, several of us agree that it was some of the hardest writing that we have ever done. My thanks, therefore, to all the invited authors who accompanied me on this journey, as well as those who had to leave the project at various stages due to unexpected life issues. I express gratitude, also, to members of the editorial team, all of whom are probably cursing the concept of a special issue by now, too.

Given all these potential stumbling blocks it is especially interesting to see how each author eventually addressed the call. For some authors, the focus of their contribution is firmly on the past fifty years of IL research, or the analysis of oversights and gaps within scholarship that has had lasting impact within the field. Thus, Alejandro Uribe-Tirado and Juan Machin-Mastromatteo's piece on the beginnings of IL in Latin America, which is copyedited by Harriet David, extends IL beyond its typical Western origin narrative, while Drew Whitworth's presentation of archives as the prologue of IL, which is copyedited by new copyeditor, Lynsey Blandford, further questions the oft-mentioned 1974 start date. Other authors have reflected on the evolution of a specific aspect of the field, which provides useful historical continuity for a field that is often criticised for running, magpie-like, after the latest shiny object. Along these

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lines, Andrew Shenton provides an interesting analysis of how ideas of information evaluation have progressed since the early days of IL, copyedited by Amber Edwards, while Geoff Walton, whose work has been copyedited by Waseem Farooq and Harriet David, offers a more personal take on the development of his own IL trajectory since the start of his involvement in the field (which is not 1974, as he is swift to point out...).

For other authors, however, the special issue provided an opportunity to think about oversights and gaps within existing scholarship or to challenge unresolved issues in the present day. Jess Haigh's piece on critical information literacy (CIL), for example, which is copyedited by Nimisha Bhat, neatly skewers the continued lack of library manager engagement with teaching practices and the implications this has for reflexive engagement in the field. Vic Grant's work on information creation, which is copyedited by new copyeditor, Tasha Cooper, similarly interrogates the supposed turn to decolonisation when IL continues to prioritise positivist knowledge hierarchies. Authors also focus their attention on ongoing structural issues within our field (no, it's still not a discipline) of study, with Dijana Šobota's piece, which is copyedited by Harriet David, making a strong case for the need to reconcile inadvertent workplace IL and CIL silos. Perhaps one of the most poignant pieces, however, comes from Maura Seale and Karen Nicholson, who reflect on the value of IL given the growing range of anomalies, contradictions and unresolved issues within research and practice. Suggesting that a return to "how to library" might prevent us from another fifty years of "rehashing" tired old debates, this contribution, which is copyedited by Amber Edwards, forms a thought-provoking finale.

Perhaps the most popular way of exploring the fiftieth anniversary of IL, though, was to future-gaze or to consider trends, reflect on key questions, and develop themes and areas of interest for future researchers. As befits our eclectic field, several authors chose to use this approach to advocate for the (re)introduction or (re)alignment of IL with certain areas of study. Thus, Laura Saunders, whose contribution was copyedited by Waseem Farooq, advocates for greater engagement with psychology and neuroscience literature to extend considerations of information evaluation. In contrast, Silvia Vong, whose writing was copyedited by Amber Edwards, argues that misalignment between teaching principles and values would benefit from a consideration of how our work supports a pedagogy of hypocrisy, as well as how we might use social work literature to deconstruct these ideas. Authors also advocated for a return to our own roots, with Nicholae Cline and Jorge López-McKnight's exhortation to "dream responsibly," copyedited by Andrea Brooks, calling for a reconsideration of how the pioneering work of LIS theorist, Elfreda Chatman, might reframe IL as "capacious" and as "carrying force and movement" even when it is set against the violence of the colonial present.

Authors also connect their vision for IL with social change, arguing that evolving information ecosystems require adaptations in how we understand key IL concepts. For some authors, it is misinformation that sparks the need for a shift, with Hilary Hughes, who is copyedited by Nimisha Bhat, making a case for the consideration of wellbeing given the polluted state of our information environments. Along these lines, Anna-Maija Multas, who is copyedited by Harriet David, advocates for the inclusion of information creation within IL research due to the changes that social media and other technologies continue to wreak. Yet another take comes from Alison Hicks, also copyedited by Harriet David, who sees ongoing social polarisation as a chance to explore IL's negative space, or what has been obscured through our focus on more socially acceptable goals. Beyond changing information environments, Artificial Intelligence (AI) forms an unsurprising influence, with Elizabeth Hutchinson, copyedited by Batul Alsaraji, arguing for the need to adapt inquiry-based learning, and Noora Hirvonen, also copyedited by Batul

Alsaraji, advocating for the foregrounding of power and agency within AI-shaped information landscapes. In contrast, Annemaree Lloyd, who is copyedited by Nimisha Bhat, draws upon the far less explored concept of the Anthropocene to point out that shifts in what it means to be human calls for a reconsideration of how IL plays out in everyday worlds.

In sum, despite the many difficulties, authors have succeeded in presenting a range of different opinions, arguments, and approaches to thinking about IL during its 50th anniversary. While there are disagreements, with approaches that are praised in one piece being amusingly panned in another, each piece succeeds in offering a perspective on IL as either a research (what is IL?) or a teaching (how do we teach for it?) object that will likely provoke or give pause in equal measure. It's now over to you to consider how we move forward from this snapshot of IL at 50; I look forward to future reflections on subsequent anniversaries, whatever IL ends up becoming.

## Regular Issue

Lastly, and before you get swept away in anniversary fever, please don't forget that we are publishing our regular issue at the same time! Please read on for details of the contributions to this June issue of JIL.

Kicking off the research article section, we have a paper from Eric Silberberg, who explores the design of a peer observation instrument for IL instruction. Designed (and tested) through interviews with teaching librarians as well as an examination of collected data, the peer observation tool aims to support professional development through supporting opportunities for librarians to engage in critical reflection. Findings that demonstrate the importance of this tool for student centred teaching strategies speak to the importance of continuing to explore low inference approaches to teacher development. This paper is copyedited by Tasha Cooper.

The second research article is from Team Ohio State, and offers their exploration of how Bloom's revised taxonomy might be used to bridge between different conceptions of IL. Written by Amanda Folk, Katie Blocksidge, Jane Hammons and Hanna Primeau, this paper draws upon a survey of instructors and instructional support staff that aimed to explore how practical and more abstract approaches to IL teaching can be scaffolded in the classroom. Addressing a gap within professional standards and documentation, this paper establishes a taxonomy that could help to think about differences in lower and higher order thinking. This paper is copyedited by Lynsey Blandford.

A paper exploring the self-tracking practices of LGBTQ+ students is up next, written by Pam McKinney, Corin Peacock and Andrew Cox. Drawing upon semi-structured interviews with six students who identify as LGBTQ+ self-trackers, the paper integrates questions of privacy and data-sharing into a broader consideration of corporeal forms of information. Ultimately establishing how these tools can be empowering for some users, the paper finishes by recommending future research with trans students as well as presenting implications for app designers. The paper is copyedited by Andrea Brooks.

Our final research paper is from Katie Blocksidge and Hanna Primeau, who have turned their attention to emotions and first year student affective experiences. Questioning whether professional attention has sidelined emotional considerations from our understanding of IL, the paper draws upon student interviews to draw out how learners engage both positively and

negatively with research. Demonstrating that emotions are far more complex than typically presented, findings from this paper also speak to the important implications of this work on the timing and structure of IL teaching interventions. This paper is copyedited by Harriet David.

In the remaining sections of the regular issue of JIL, I am pleased that we have LILAC conference reports from Amelia Haire, Bruce Ryan, Janice Fernandes, and Sarah Purcell and Thomas Mandall, as well as book reviews from Anders Tobiason, Kevin Augustine, and Janice Fernandes. With thanks to all authors as well as to Managing Editor, Meg Westbury, and Book Review Editor, Gerry Delaney, for wrangling these sections.