

Information Literacy in Higher Education

(Emphasizing Indian Context)

Universities and other institutions of higher learning should be responsible for producing students to meet the demands of the information age. Information literacy education is essential to produce such type of students. Developing lifelong learners is central to the mission of higher education institutions. Several efforts have been done to produce information literate students which are as follows:

Curricular approach

There is a need to incorporate information literacy programmes in the academic curriculum to produce information literate students. Information Literacy can be incorporated in curriculum in number of ways. Some examples are as follows:

Bill Johnson and Sheila Webber (2003) in his paper entitled “Information Literacy in Higher Education: a review and case study” discussed the current state of information literacy education in the UK, USA and Australia. They discussed the place of information literacy in the higher education curriculum and identified the problems with current practice. They concluded after their survey that information literacy is an important key discipline of the information society and they proposed a model of the information literate student and vision of the information literate university.

Some examples of different universities are as follows:

- **Information Literacy Across the Curriculum Action Plan (College of DuPage).** Access: <http://www.cod.edu/library/services/faculty/infolit/actionplan.pdf>
- **Plan for Information Literacy at the University of Rhode Island (URI)** Access: http://www.uri.edu/library/instruction_services/infolitplan.html
- **Library Instruction Program (University of Massachusetts Boston)** Access: <http://www.lib.umb.edu/node/1489>
- **Discipline-Based Information Literacy (Carleton College)** Access: http://apps.carleton.edu/campus/library/about/infolit/mellon_present/
- **Integrating Information Literacy into Course Assignments (Gettysburg College).** Access: <http://www.gettysburg.edu/library/information/departments/reference/instruction/assignments.dot>
- In India, the Department of Library and Information Science of University of Delhi has included a paper entitled Information Literacy Applications in LIS at masters level from academic session 2009-2010.
- Several Library schools of different Indian universities included information literacy as a topic in a paper in curriculum of MLIS such as Gujrat University.

Teachers play an important role in shaping the student information literacy skills in their classrooms. Some argue that it is the duty of librarian to impart information literacy education by organising several information literacy programmes in the library. No doubt it is right, but it is complete when the faculty takes time in imparting them in their class room too. There should be a collective effort. Students in India are too dependent on the teachers for their information. Efforts can be done collectively by teachers and librarian to impart information literacy education. Both can act as a facilitator for information literacy.

Information Literacy Programmes (ILP) for Faculty and Students

Universities and Colleges and their libraries must give a platform to their students for sharing their views by organising Discussions, Workshops, Guest Lectures, orientation and refresher programmes, Seminars and Conferences. Teachers play a key role in providing students with diverse opportunities to learn how to use information wisely. Information literacy education for teachers helps to improve their ability to locate, access, evaluate and synthesize information needed to complete academic course work for their students. After all students learn from teachers. Faculty can mentor or coach their students with use of new technologies such as use of internet, power point presentations, audio visual aids etc. To cope up the teachers with new information and communication technologies, information literacy education is essential for teachers also. Academic Staff College of different universities organize Orientation and refresher courses for teachers. Information literacy education may be incorporated in these courses.

A variety of programmes are being used in the US, UK and other European countries. However, there is a need to develop ILP which are more suitable in Indian higher education environment keeping in view the skills and competencies of college students. Presently, India has presently 45 Central Universities, 312 State Universities, 129 Deemed Universities and 173 Private universities (UGC Report 2014). In addition, there are five institutes established under State Act and 13 institutes of national importance. There are 33,000 colleges, which include 1,800 women's colleges. The total enrolment of students in universities and colleges is about 9.5 lakhs while the number of teachers is 4.5 lakhs.

Delhi University and Madras University have started information literacy programmes. University and College Libraries should conduct the orientation programme for the faculty and students to make them aware of electronic resources and how to use these resources.

Central Reference Library of University of Delhi. Delhi University Library System comprising of more than 30 libraries has started **Information Literacy and Competency Programme (ILCP)** with the following objectives:

- To provide an indication as to what is there on Internet related to their course of study;
- To show how web resources could be of immense use in their academic pursuit and research.
- To show the usefulness of various multimedia resources on web related on to their Syllabi.

- To describe specific features of various data bases being subscribed by DULS.
- To promote the use of subscribed databases in academics and research.
- To acquaint the users with the use of various search techniques to retrieve relevant information.
- To recognize the need for information, and to evaluate, organize, interpret, and communicate information in all its formats.
- To promote that Information Competency is for participants' academic and vocational success and for lifelong learning.
- To provide course-integrated instruction in collaboration with the faculty and in alignment with course objectives.
- To establish a direct interaction between users and library professionals.

5.3.2.2 Information Literacy Programmes for Library and Information Professionals:

Some examples are:

- IFLA has established an information literacy section. This section has developed an information literacy resources directory called **InfoLit Global**. Librarians, educators and information professionals may self-register and upload information literacy related materials. According to IFLA website “the primary purpose of the Information Literacy section is to foster international cooperation in the development of information literacy education in all types of libraries and information institutions”. Access : <http://www.ifla.org/en/about-information-literacy>
- **Information Literacy for Teaching and Learning: A Workshop for Faculty and Librarians** (James Madison University)
Access: <http://www.lib.jmu.edu/instruction/2006assignments.aspx>
- **UWired** This is an information literacy program established at the University of Washington. UWired is a campus wide effort. The chief goal of the program is to create an electronic community in which communication, collaboration and information technologies are integral to teaching and learning.

There are several institutions that run continuing professional development courses and programme for library and information professionals in India. NISCAIR, ILA, IASLIC are involved in **continuing professional** development. Library of University of Hyderabad had run training sessions in small groups with hands on experience for all users with training to use the OPAC.

In India , UGC has taken sincere efforts to bring a boost in the higher education system by introducing UGC – INFONET E-journals consortium project. Information and Library Network (INFLIBNET) , the coordinating agency for UGC – INFONET project, has been conducted various training programmes, user awareness programmes, workshops and seminars to research scholars, faculty members and library staff of 40 universities across the country.

INFLIBNET is also responsible for providing training to university library professionals in the use of this network for providing a variety of services to the users. Examples are as follows:

- Computer application to library and information services (CALIS) – a four week intensive training programme focusing on the practical aspects in the use of computers in the library.
- Workshop on Automation and networking of university libraries (WANULIP), which covers the implementation of INFLIBNET in university libraries.

Realizing, the importance of Information Literacy, the **Central Library of IIT Madras** is deeply engaged in Information Literacy activities through – bringing out various brochures, pamphlets, fact sheets, tutorials, conferences, invited talks, specialized presentations for the faculty, students, industries, Library Staff and librarians.

Information Literacy Programs Conducted at IIT, Madras:

- Springer Link Database on 27-09-2007
- JCCC on 17-09-2007
- Customer Satisfaction in a Library and Information Centre on 14-08-2007 by Dr. Dong-Geun OH, Professor, Department of Library and Information Science, Kei-Myung University, South Korea
- National Workshop on E-Resources Management for Excellence during 16-18 July 2007 under Continuing Education Programme
- National Workshop on LIS Teacher and the Digital Future during January 17-19 2007 Jointly organized by Central Library, IIT Madras and IATLIS under Continuing Education Programme.
- Web Resources and Services available at the Central Library of IIT Madras on 03-11-2006 by Dr. Harish Chandra, Librarian.
- Half-Day Workshop on Information handling in Digital Era (Coverage: Search Engines, Digital Preservation, Metadata Standards and WIKISPACE) on 30-10-2006
- Image Processing in Web Content on 14-08-2006 by Prof. Fredric Andres, Faculty of Computer Science, National Informatics Centre, Tokyo , Japan.
- CAPITALINE: CORPORATE DATABASE ON 13-07-2006 BY Mr. N.R. Vamanan, Marketing Executive, Capital Market, Chennai.
- Programme on Smart Discovery using Web of Science (WOS) and Value of Backfiles on 26-05-2006 by Dr, Allen Yeo, Principal Consultant, Thomson Scientific, Singapore.
- Web of Science (Science Citation Index Extended) on 07-04-2006 by Mr. Mark Wheeler, Thomas Scientific Customer Education and Support Department, UK

- Role of Electronic Databases in R&D Excellence by Edutech India Pvt. Ltd on 16-03-2006
- Science Direct and Scopus on 21-02-2006 By Mr. Nishant Atri, Elsevier India , New Delhi.
- Research and Discussion Forum of the Department of HSS and the Central Library, IIT Madras Jointly organized a Talk on WHAT CAN OPEN ACCESS DO TO SCIENCE AND SCHOLARSHIP? On 24-02-2006 .
- Presentation on Web of Science and J-Gate on 16-11-2005 by Informatics India , Bangalore.
- Role of Knowledge Centre in 21 st Century on 07-03-2005 by Dr. H.K. Kaul, Director, DELNET,
- Convincing Multi Faculty Users in a Modern Learning Resources Center by Dr B.S. Nigam, Head, Department of Library and Information Science Makhanlal Chaturvedi National University of Journalism, Bhopal Noida Campus, on 09-08-2005
- Digital Information Management by Dr P.Pichappen, Anna Malai University on 13-01-2005
- Scholarly Information from Web by Dr Edward Proctor, South West Missouri State University, USA on 12-01-2005
- Development in Search Engines by Dr Edward Proctor, South West Missouri State University, USA on 11-01-2005
- National Workshop on Building Digital Libraries using DSpace during 16-17th December 2004
- Web of Knowledge on 22-11-2004 addressed by Mr. Mark Wheeler, ISI – Thomson Scientific, Asia Pacific Region, Singapore.
- Web of Science on 23-08-2004 addressed by Mr. Sanjay Grover, Informatics India.
- Tutorial on Development and Mangement of Digital Resources on 21-01-2004
- Seminar on Web Resource Management on 13-08-2003
- Presentation on Web Searching Techniques on 24-09-2003
- Presentation on Web of Science on 01-04-2003
- Industrial Information Services on 22-02-2002
- Access : <http://www.cenlib.iitm.ac.in/docs/library/index.php?page=infolit>

Conferences / Seminars / Workshops on Information Literacy:

There are several national and international conferences especially on information literacy. In 2003, the National Forum on Information Literacy, together UNESCO and the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science, sponsored an international conference in Prague with representatives from some twenty-three countries to discuss the importance of information literacy within a global context. As a result of this conference, the International Alliance for Information Literacy (IAIL). One of its goals is to allow for the sharing of information literacy research and knowledge between nations. IFLA Information Literacy Section organized an annual satellite conference associated with the IFLA world Library and Information Congress. Within the UK, there has been a Librarian's Information Literacy Annual Conference (LILAC) in 2005 by an information literacy group of Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP). European Conference on Information Literacy (ECIL) held its first conference during 22nd to 25th Oct'2013 in Istanbul, Turkey. Another European Conference on Information Literacy will be held from 20 to 23' Oct 2014 at Dubrovnik, Croatia. One more International Conference on Information Literacy will be held from 9 to 11 Oct.'2014 will be held at Coastal Georgia Centre, Savannah, GA. Some other notable conferences are as follows:

- March 14-16, 2013, Chicago, IL **Digital Media & Learning Conference 2013**
Access: <http://www.macfound.org/events/77/>
- March 25-27, 2013, University of Manchester (UK) Library **Librarians Information Literacy Annual Conference (LILAC)** Access : <http://lilacconference.com/WP/>
- April 17-19, 2013, Sibiu, Romania **4th International Conference on Information Science and Information Literacy** Access: <http://www.ifla.org/events/the-4th-international-conference-on-information-science-and-information-literacy>
- September 20-21, 2013, Savannah, GA **Georgia International Conference on Information Literacy** Access : <http://ceps.georgiasouthern.edu/conted/infolit.html>

An international workshop to promote information literacy in south and south East Asia was held at Punjab University, Patiala with the support of UNESCO and other partners from 3 to 7 Oct. 2005. Around 65 delegates representing Bangladesh, India, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Thailand had participated in the workshop. The workshop had been organized by Jagtar Singh, Director for the south Asia region section of the international association of school librarianship (IASL) under the title “Empowering 8 – Applying a problem solving model in south and southeast Asia to promote information literacy.”

An international conference on “knowledge networking in ICT era” was held from 22nd to 24th January' 2009 in Chennai organized by Society for the Advancement of Library and Information Science (SALIS), B.S. Abdur Rahman Crescent Engineering College, Chennai with UNESCO. There was a special session on “information, media and digital literacy” and there are various presentations on different aspects on information literacy in this session.

An international conference on Information Literacy Society has been held recently from 6 to 8 March'2014 in Department of Library and Information Science, North Eastern Hill University, Shilong.

In this module attempt has been made to discuss about the origin and need of information literacy, Components of information literacy, information literacy and competency standards, information literacy models and initiatives taken for information literacy in higher education. Different kinds of initiatives have been taken by higher education institutions for information literacy. Some institutions are including information literacy in curriculum. Several institutions are organizing information literacy programmes for their students and faculties. Libraries of higher education institutions are also engaged in these programmes. Now a days, it is essential to produce information literate persons for the progress of our nation and higher education institutions can play an important role for the same.

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