

Are national information literacy policies possible?

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A lesson from history?

- little agreement about what information actually is - people's views influenced by education, experience, personal agendas and issues of technology
- role of government poorly defined, government engagement with information issues is intermittent and frequently vestigial
- relationship between governments and information organisations is often weak, frequently nonexistent. Information organisations themselves do not co-operate harmoniously
- information retrieval or information searching, however defined, has travelled from being a specialist issue/skill, based round science and technology to being a skill for everyone and covering all subjects
- information literacy in a historical context is invisible

The Information Society

Term defines a society in which the **creation, distribution and treatment of information** have become the most significant economic and cultural activities.

An information society also covers many related sectors which include industrial and economic policy, technology policy, telecommunications policy and a huge sector: social issues and policies that comprise e-government, education, e-health, media policy and cultural issues **within which much of the material of information literacy lies.**

(UNESCO 2009:123-124).

Information literacy is about...

- not only the evaluation and use of traditional 'library' sources but also **social policy issues**, relating to the relief of inequality and disadvantage, **skills development** for a post industrial society, **critical thinking and lifelong learning**, an activity which information literacy informs and supports, **digital literacy, school and higher education curricula, early years learning, health issues**, the dynamics of the **workplace, learning and teaching skills and strategies** with an increasing emphasis on teaching and learning in informal situations

Information literacy activism/development

- National concern
- Process analysis
- Product development (learning and teaching materials)
- Not a logical sequence and product development receives most attention and more in HE than other sectors

(Town 2003)

If we are to have national information literacy policies how do we answer these questions ?

- What is an information literacy policy?
- What are information literacy policies for?
- What is the role of an information literacy policy within the wider world of information policy making?
- How can information literacy be defined to distinguish it from ICT infrastructural issues?
- Who should make information literacy policy?
- How can the information professional exert influence outside the information sector?
- What sort of agendas should information literacy policy making identify/collaborate with, for example, educational and social policy, lifelong learning and health awareness?
- Is information literacy recognised in policy agendas worldwide?
- Can information literacy exploit digital inclusion agendas?
- What kind of state is receptive to information literacy policies?
- Have information literacy policies been systematically tested and evaluated?
- Should they be just, prescriptive, skills based documents?

Working relationships (1)

- **Partnerships and networking is crucial** using both personal and professional contacts
- **Work cross sectorally** and not just with librarians and information specialists
- **Develop a community of practice.** This may be web based but could also involve face to face meetings. It should not be restricted to the library and information science profession
- **Identify organisations to work with** – Skills development agencies and other organizations involved in workplace training, organisations concerned with promoting digital inclusion, curriculum development bodies in education, teachers and university lecturers' organisations, professional organisations which have an education and training role, job centres and careers advisors, community learning and development organisations, telecommunications regulators such as Ofcom in the UK, chambers of commerce, employers' organizations and trade union representative bodies. All these have an interest in information literacy outcomes.

Working relationships (2)

- **Offer support to practitioners.** Support at policy levels informs the development of good practice at institutional level which can be fed back to further policy development, thus creating a virtuous circle. This is particularly helpful to small organisations or solo operators like school librarians
- **Have meetings and involve people.** Encourage reporting on activities by activists. Thus gives activists an opportunity to present their ideas and receive comments and constructive criticism. Outcomes can then be fed into policy making
- **Develop a common vocabulary** with which all stakeholders and partners can engage. Avoid 'librarian' speak

Research and development (1)

- Balance the utilitarian educational agenda against what has been called the **affective dimension**, personal social development and self fulfilment, outcomes which are difficult to measure but are for the people involved the most important of all
- The development of **learning material content should be an outcome of policy thinking but must be cross sectoral** and should not simply be higher education material 'bolted' on to another context such as workplace information literacy skills development. The role of project partners is essential in developing materials and exemplars of good practice
- **Do your homework in the widest sense.** Be aware of relevant research and engage in market orientated action research, preferably with other partners and including those outwith the information sector. Exemplars of good practice and case studies can add value as local, in-house initiatives can inform wider practice

Research and development (2)

- **Funding: policy making especially if viewed as long term is expensive and requires dedicated staff.** Developing strategy strands which are likely to attract funding from governments and NGOs are worth pursuing
- **Encourage writing and reporting** so that others both within the country and abroad can be aware of your work and learn from it and comment on it
- **Evaluate activity preferably with partners**
- **Link relevant information literacy skills levels to the school curriculum.** The literacies curriculum outcomes are the most obvious but other areas are also relevant
- **Recognise and work with innovative learning and teaching agendas** which recognise independent learning as they are likely to be sympathetic to information literacy

Strategies

- Society and community based model
- Engage with politicians and public servants
- How do you address sustainability issues?
 - National agency – but needs staffing, funding and sustainability
 - Leadership by a professional body – a reasonable option but IL has to compete with other priorities
 - Community of practice – cheap, easy, communication easy but must integrate with national strategic priorities

Information skills for a 21st century Scotland

Information skills for a 21st Century Scotland

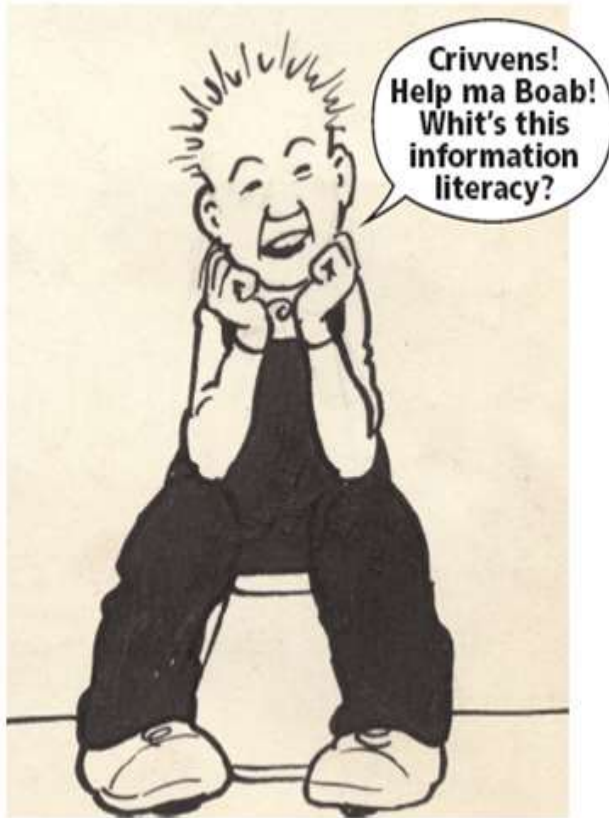
www.therightinformation.org/

Launched 11th June
2012
@ CILIPS Annual
Conference in Dundee

New online information
literacy community of
practice: Information
Skills for a 21st century
Scotland.

More than a website ...

Hosted by Scottish
Library and Information
Council (SLIC)



Our Wullie © D.C. Thomson & Co. Ltd

An online information literacy community of practice
And he's back!

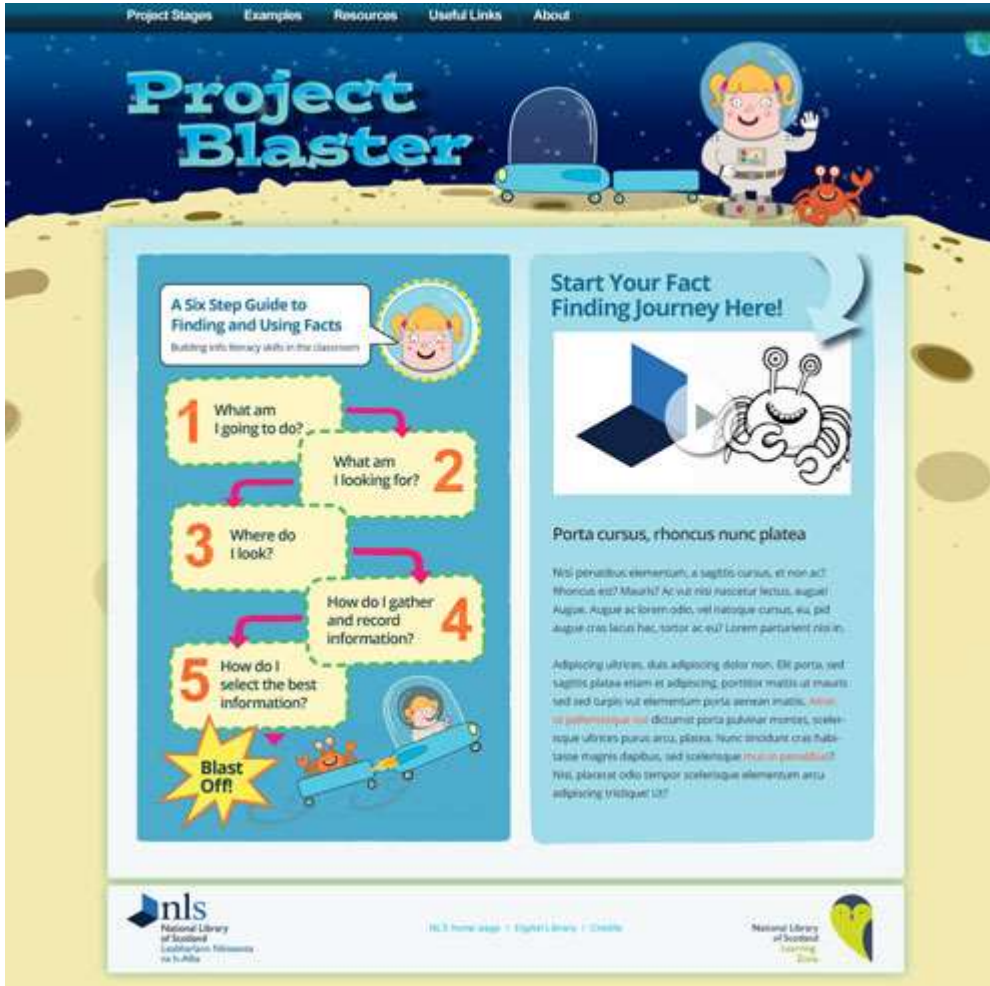
Aims and activities of the community of practice

- Developing core information literacy skills in further education
- Assessing the impact of information literacy training
- Advocacy for information literacy
- Instructing teachers in information literacy
- Information literacy as an employability skill
- Information literacy toolkits for young people
- Teaching information literacy skills in public libraries
- Links between schools and public libraries
- Use of electronic information literacy resources in public libraries
- Online training packages in higher education
- Workplace information literacy skills

Some work to date

- FE training materials – Dundee College
- A comprehensive HE IL package – SMILE
- Programme of awareness raising within the profession
- Presentation to a Scottish Parliament Committee
- Further development of framework
- Project Blaster (primary school project)
- Plan training events
- Book – *Information literacy and lifelong learning*
www.woodheadpublishing.com/en/book.aspx?bookID=2618&ChandosTitle=1

Project Blaster: information literacy for a digital age



Project Stages Examples Resources Useful Links About

Project Blaster

A Six Step Guide to Finding and Using Facts
Building info literacy skills in the classroom

- 1 What am I going to do?
- 2 What am I looking for?
- 3 Where do I look?
- 4 How do I gather and record information?
- 5 How do I select the best information?


Blast Off!

Start Your Fact Finding journey Here!


Porta cursus, rhoncus nunc platea

Wol peratibus elementum, a sagittis cursus, et non ac? Rhoncus est? Maure? Ac ut nisi necesse lectus, augue! Augue, augue ac lorem odio, vel nuncque cursus, eu, sed augue cras laisi hac, sator ac eu? Lorem partem nisi in.

Adipiscing ultrices, duis adipiscing dolor non, Eri porta, sed sagittis platea enim et adipiscing, portitor mattis ut maure sed sed digne vul elementum porta semper mattis, Adip, ut perennitibus non dictum porta subter maure, scelerisque ultrices purus arsu, platea. Nunc prociant cras habitare magna dapibus, sed scelerisque **tracis possidit?** Nisi, platea et odio tempor scelerisque elementum arsu adipiscing tristique! Ut?

 National Library of Scotland
Leabharlann Nàiseanta na h-Alba

[nls home page](#) | [Digital Library](#) | [Contact](#)

 National Library of Scotland
Learning
2016

A skills-based cross-curricular resource to help primary pupils learn basic research skills

A six step guide that shows teachers and pupils how to find, select and analyse a wide range of information for school projects whether online or print-based

Aims to help pupils build the critical skills necessary to assess the increasing amount of information they will encounter in their learning journey



Information and Digital Literacy Provision

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Types of Activities



- ✓ Using a computer as a research tool
- ✓ Finding reliable online information
- ✓ Making use of library resources
- ✓ Understanding and using weights and measures

Questions?



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