

'Whither goes Information Literacy'

Rapporteur Report

from Ralph Catts

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Acknowledgements

- The organisers and all the people behind the scenes
- The contributors – and especially those from a Media Literacy context who crossed the discipline divide to share conceptions
- All here and elsewhere who inform my continuing journey in (M)IL.

A maturing discipline needs quality research

- The good news is that some papers presented at this conference meet rigorous criteria for research quality and would be highly rated in the UK research excellence framework.
- The bad news is Not enough of (M)IL research is credible to the wider research community.

Basic Issues in enhancing research

- Ethical considerations must be addressed and reported explicitly;
- Populations from whom data is collected must be described;
- response rates must be made explicit;
- Methodologies require accurate reporting.

Comments on qualitative research

- Christine Bruce's thesis is widely regarded beyond Information Science as exemplary research.

BUT, some practices discredit IL research.

For example:

- Describing as ethnography short interviews with a few people;
- Choosing people who either agree with your view point, or who are immediately accessible, is not purposeful selection – it is opportunistic.

Comments on quantitative research

- There must be a sound theoretical framework;
- Data collection must use content valid pre-tested tools with construct validity;
- Reliability must be reported;
- The response rate is an essential element for credible reporting;
- Pre and post-tests must report data for the same respondents.

Research Issues raised included -

At this conference:

- Rene Schneider called for IL to embrace research data literacy
- Franziska Wein identified the problem with small scale quantitative research producing non-significant results.

There are solutions:

Solutions for effective research

- A) More collaborative cross institutional research; see examples from Spain and UK
- B) Meta-analysis (statistical or qualitative) to combine data across studies while controlling for variations in contexts – this depends on collecting and reporting meta-data about research contexts; and
- C) Create a (M)IL research data repository

Quality practitioner research

- Practitioner research is important; but
- Please do not rely on anecdotal claims;
- A golden rule – if you do not learn something new you have wasted the time of participants.
- Librarians love to say ‘ask a librarian’ – I suggest practitioners ‘ask a researcher’.

Who will lead Research Capacity Building in MIL?

- Could the mentoring with research students as done here by Annemaree Lloyd and Albert Boekhorst be expanded in future conferences?
- Other professional bodies have guidelines for research ethics, and generic guides for reporting of research meta-data, should MIL?
- Can we develop a MIL research data repository?

Recommendation: That peak bodies such as IFLA and UNESCO foster:

- Standards for research practice and for reporting meta data?
- use of consistent data collection methods
- Repositories for both qualitative and quantitative research data?
- Guidelines and resources for practitioner research?

Whither Information Literacy?

- The title is meant to convey two meanings.

In English, whither can mean either:

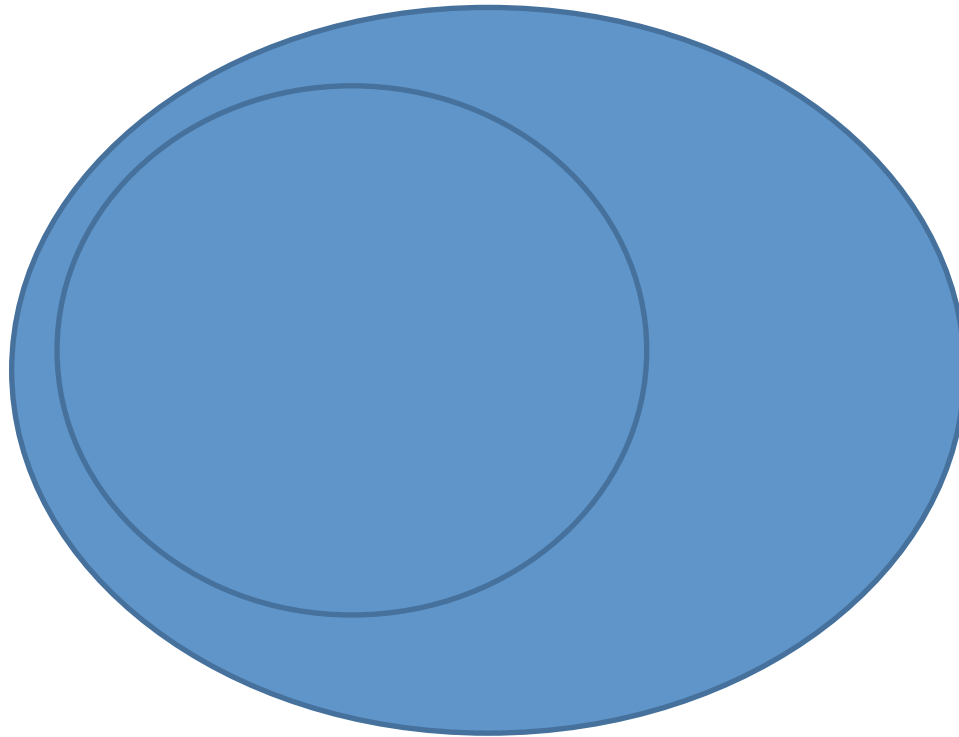
- To die off; or
- Which way now?

The evidence of this conference is that the demise of IL research is not imminent, so ...

How do we deal with (M)IL?

- What is the future for research and practice in information and library science now that we have the merging of technologies and the new construct – Media Information Literacy?
- When pressed Paul Zurkowski said the focus should be on the content – not the medium, and hence he preferred IL.
- There was loud applause – but think again.

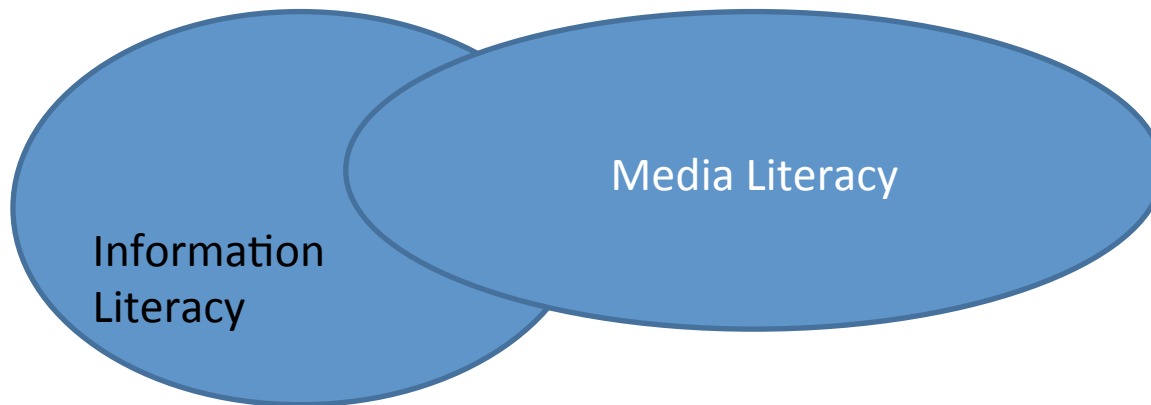
If one of these circles is ML and one is IL – which is the larger circle?



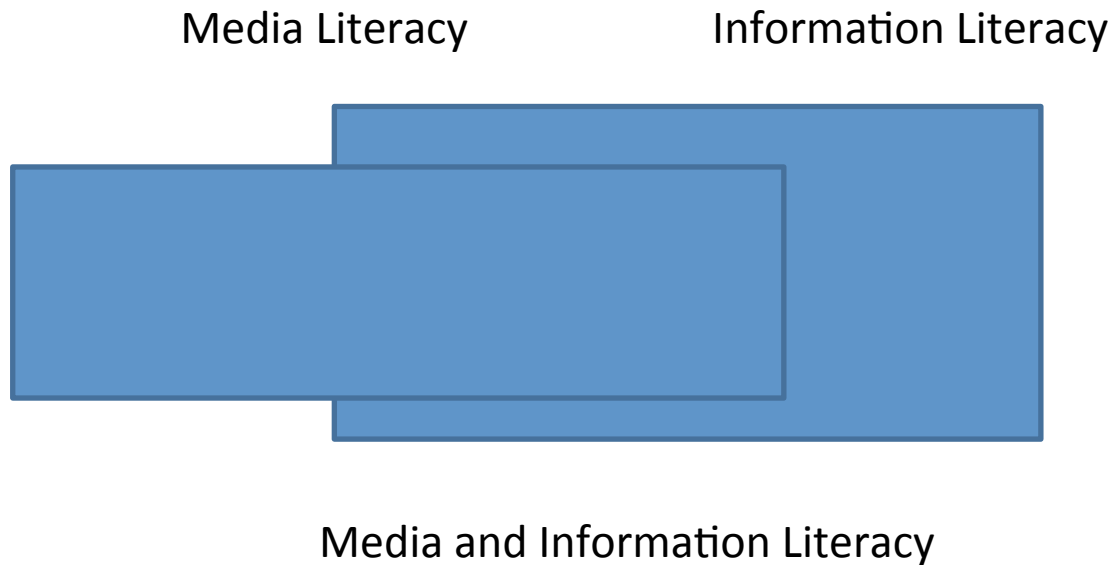
Assumptions about MIL

Is MIL one, two or three constructs?

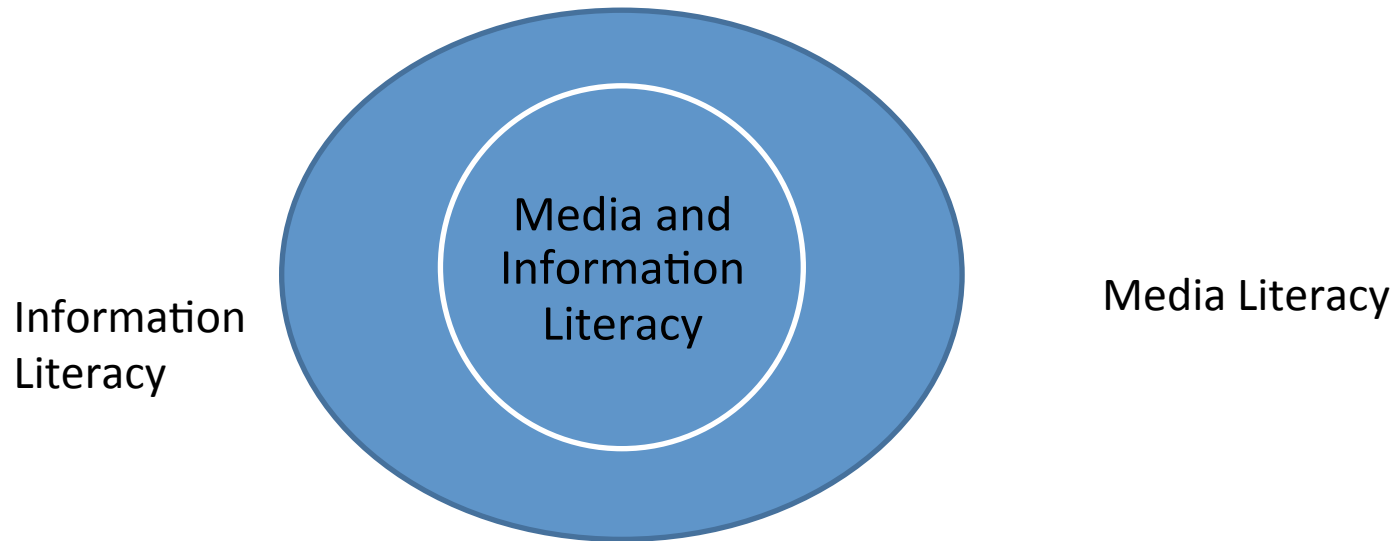
Is there little common area between ML and IL?



Or does Media and Information Literacy include most of ML and IL?



We need research to determine how much of ML and IL are common in MIL



Which way now?

- Alice Lee and Jesus Lau have compared media literacy and information literacy:
 - They compared ways of thinking; ways of working; and ways of being (social issues, human rights)
- Are differences matters of degree or substantive?
- We could use MIL Indicators to test quantitatively how much is common.

Priorities for Research

- A qualitative study of the MIL practices of HE students (e.g. a comparative case study of Media Studies and Library Science students)
- Is there a relationship between MIL competence of teachers and
 - A) classroom pedagogic practices; and
 - B) outcomes of student learning?

'Whither goes Information Literacy' – barriers to impact

- Some here agree that 'Information Literacy' is a barrier to dialogue with other disciplines;
- Within libraries could there be a MIL sub-discipline of IL in (academic) contexts?
- At present, claims for (M)IL are mainly assertions or beliefs – but policy makers and faculty are not convinced by unsubstantiated claims for an untested MIL construct.

An issue for (M)IL Competencies

- Current (M)IL competencies are conceived as capacities of an individual, but
- Learning is increasingly dialogic involving on-line synchronous communities of practice who access and share knowledge and skills;
- Workplace practice is increasingly based on ‘collective competence’.
- What are implications for MIL competencies?

Borrowing from Kamal Atatürk

- A discipline unaware of its history will die out, BUT, I add also that -
- A faith bound by its tradition will increasingly become irrelevant.

THEREFORE

- The (M) IL construct needs to build on its traditions to meet the challenges of continual change in media and in social practices.

A few more provocative suggestions for the next conference

Should we ...

- Change the name from Europe to World? and
- Change the name from IL to MIL?
- Offer a half-day pre-conference workshop for research students with mentor academics?
- Engage more fully Media Studies professionals as part of the planning team to engage better with ML?

‘Whither IL’ - Paul Zurkowski said

*Information Literacy is dead ...Long
Live Information literacy*

As knowledge and media change we
have had to re-defined IL.

*Can you now say IL is dead ... long live
MIL - and preserve IL within a broader
concept?*

Thank you!

