

Information Literacy or Information Chasm? : Looking towards an equitable information philosophy



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Issues of
information poor,
information economy
information technology
are inextricably linked
to information literacy

Information literacy is
being emphasised in
the context of
technology and
computer
competencies rather
than as a
holistic philosophy

*People trained in the
application of
information
resources to their
work can be called
**information
literate***

*They have learned
techniques and skills
for using a wide
range of
information tools in
moulding
information
solutions to their
problems.*

In the context of
history the emphasis
on **information
literacy** is a relatively
recent but important
one.



Information Revolutions

Writing	8 BC
Printing	1450
Mass Media	1850
Entertainment	1900
Communication Toolshed Home	1980
Information Highway	2000



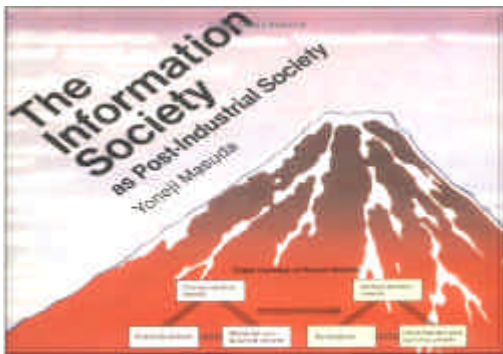
Fang, IE 1997, 'What are information revolutions?' in *A history of mass communication: Six information revolutions*. Focal, Boston

Still Revolving.....

Web 2.0 ?
Social
Interacting
Sharing



Web 3.0 ?
Data Integration
Intelligent Web?



<http://www.flickr.com/photos/caseorganic/2790352368/>



There is evidence that all sectors of society are not yet equipped and ready to thrive in the information age

The focus was on information infrastructure: literacy and ICT skills are seen as separate entities, not as one holistic approach

UN literacy decade 2003– 2012
UNESCO 2003

Literacy as Freedom

'Inequities among nations and individuals in today's Information Society'
<http://www.unesco.org/infocentre/literacy.htm>

The Prague Declaration 2003

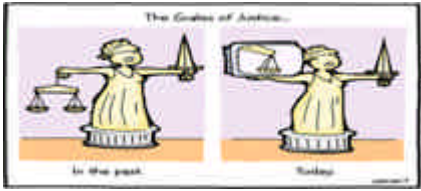
Governments to address information literacy programs nationally, as a key to the development of society in reaching **equity of access and use of information for all citizens**, thus enhancing information flow to education, culture and economy

Need provision of **ready access to communication technologies, unrestricted availability of needed information for information literate citizenry...** to create a competitive workforce
(The Prague Declaration 2003)

The Chasm

For third world and developing countries who are without participation in, and exposure to, the worldwide technology phenomenon, the information rich and poor chasm will undoubtedly grow wider, not correct this divide, and definitely not quickly create an economically viable workforce
(The Prague Declaration 2003)

Cultural Poverty



Technological competence has joined literacy as a potent factor capable of separating culturally rich from culturally poor. Bannerman (1996 p250)

Cultural Poverty solution

Developing nations need solid education programs in **basic information literacy** and the skills in **any means of non digital information and knowledge accessible to them**. This will then place these citizens and students in a much improved situation to tackle **digital information literacy** when the technology arrives.

Hawkins (2001, cited in Stern 2003 p6), Stern (2003 p6) and Pejova (2003 p2)

The International Criminal Court

Interns will gain an understanding of the Court's objectives and of the challenges faced by the organisation generally, and a detailed knowledge of the mission and work of one area of the Court in particular. With practical experience of the implementation of international criminal justice in this unique institution, participants will have an opportunity to augment their knowledge and expertise at the national or international level whilst making a valuable contribution to the work of the



With Interns Anatolé and Rosa

An Educational Catch-22?

The cultural and educational opportunities available in an average community are often missed by people who lack the ability to keep informed of such activities

The people who most need the empowerment inherent in being information literate are the least likely to have learning experiences that will promote these abilities

The International Criminal Court & Research Institute (2004 p2)

ICT Development Index – Indicators

<http://www.au.gov/ICT/Indicators/2009/index.html>

user bit/s) '07	Computer % households '07	Bandwidth(per
Australia	73%	8,035
New Zealand	65.9%	6,569
Turkmenistan	0.5%	3414
UK	67%	55,281
Zimbabwe	1.8%	42
Luxembourg	75%	9,617,645

ICT Development Index

The question remains as to whether the global digital divide is widening or narrowing, what the contributing factors are, and what progress has been made by individual countries to close the digital divide

The objectives of the ICT Development Index is provide policy makers with a useful tool to benchmark and assess their information society developments, as well as to monitor progress that has been made globally to CLOSE THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

Source: International Telecommunications Union (ITU)

Government

It is recognised by the Australian Government that a National Information Policy needs to address the issue of the **class differences** that may widen when one sector of society has a growing skills base and the other suffers significant disadvantage of similar opportunities



Workplace Information Literacy

While there is a real need to equip workers with technological skills and competencies for the workforce there is also danger of not emphasising the 'human' qualities of communication, evaluation, processing and knowledge management

Central to the heart of information literacy philosophy is that information literacy should be a significant element of learning organisations as well as being a key characteristic of lifelong learners

Source: IFLA 2005

Source: IFLA 2005

7 tenets of Information Literacy

- Using Information Technology
- Using Library and Computer Literacy
- Acquiring mental models of information systems
- Combination of information and technology skills
- Information literacy as a process
- Information literacy as an amalgam of skills, attitudes and knowledge
- Information literacy as first component in the continuum of critical thinking

The Horizon Report - Trends

Trend 1

INCREASINGLY technology skills are also critical to success in almost every arena, and those who are most facile with technology will ADVANCE while those WITHOUT ACCESS OR SKILLS WILL NOT.

The digital divide, once seen as a factor of wealth, is now seen as a factor of education

<http://www.pearsoned.com/2009/horizon-report/2009.html>

Trend 2

Technology is now recognised as a primary way to stay in touch and take control of one's own learning. Multisensory and inter disciplinary technology is integrated into everything we do.

It gives students a public voice and a means to reach beyond the classroom for interaction and exploration

Johnson, L., Levine, A., Smith, R., Smythe, T., (2009). The Horizon Report: K-12 Edition. Austin, Texas: The New Media Consortium.

Horizon Report

Schools may be in the key position to provide a **BRIDGE** over the digital divide.



IL as a Complete Educational Philosophy

There is evidence and discussion from the schools library sector that places more importance on information literacy as a **complete educational process**



The information literate school community can be viewed as philosophy as well as place...

(Cooper and Boyd 1995, pers. comm. by Herli, 3 September 2004)

Close the Chasm

