



PUBLIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS
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April 25, 2001

To: IPFW Senate Library Subcommittee
From: Information Literacy Task Force
Stuart Blythe, Bob Kostrubanic, David May (chair), Richard Ramsey, Pamela Sandstrom,
and Susan Skekloff
Re: Information Literacy at IPFW Report

During the 2000-2001 academic year, the Information Literacy Task Force was charged with three tasks: (1) to define information literacy; (2) to establish information literacy expectations and guidelines for meeting those expectations; and (3) to determine means of assessing information literacy among students at IPFW.

We began by developing the following definition of information literacy:

The traditional definition of literacy has been transformed by digital technology, demanding an additional array of information skills and concepts beyond an ability to read and write. Information literate individuals recognize when information is needed, and they are able to locate, evaluate, and ethically use that information to accomplish a specific purpose. Information literacy also involves the organization, synthesis, and presentation skills required to create and communicate information effectively.

The IPFW student who is information literate understands the role, value, and power of information in modern society, and understands the process and importance of scholarly communication in industry, government, and non-business organizations. Additionally, the information literate student appreciates how information may be used to improve the quality of life; with this knowledge, the student realizes the global networking capabilities she now possesses, and will seek to attain further information literacy skills in support of life-long learning.

To fulfill the second charge, the task force recommends that IPFW endorse the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) "Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education: Standards, Performance Indicators, and Outcomes" available at <http://www.ala.org/acrl/ilstandardlo.html> as a foundation for developing standards for information literacy at IPFW. We also recommend the endorsement of the summary set of "Core Information Competencies" developed by Ohio University Libraries and reproduced below. Finally, we recognize the need for the development of an instructional model to teach information and computer literacy competencies. Such a model would elucidate the vital role of a partnership between faculty and librarians and would lend greater support to existing university services and courses in the development of an information literate and computer literate graduate.

In summary, the information literate student will be able to:

1. **Define and articulate an information need** by:
 - a. recognizing the need to know more information than is already known;
 - b. stating a research need, problem, or issue;
 - c. formulating appropriate and relevant research questions;
 - d. defining a manageable focus and time-line.
2. **Identify and select appropriate information sources** by:
 - a. understanding the variety of information formats;
 - b. considering the costs and benefits of acquiring needed information;
 - c. selecting the appropriate resources for searching and understanding their limitations.
3. **Develop and use search strategies** by:
 - a. understanding the structure of information-finding tools;
 - b. identifying common access points of information sources;
 - c. identifying and using appropriate search techniques;
 - d. being able to refine a search as needed.
4. **Locate and retrieve relevant information** by:
 - a. recognizing the components of a citation and differentiating among types of resources;
 - b. using appropriate components of a citation to locate the original source;
 - c. understanding the conventions for naming and locating works in print and electronic formats;
 - d. being able to locate and retrieve both local and external sources of information.
5. **Evaluate the information retrieved** by:
 - a. distinguishing between popular and scholarly sources;
 - b. assessing the currency, authority, and reliability of the information retrieved;
 - c. evaluating an author's expertise, authority, and credibility;
 - d. recognizing an author's point of view (prejudices, loyalties, etc.).
6. **Organize and synthesize information effectively** by:
 - a. filtering large amounts of information and distinguishing among facts, points of view and opinion;
 - b. extracting relevant information;
 - c. organizing information in a logical and useful manner;
 - d. communicating the final product effectively, in formats appropriate to the intended audience;
 - e. incorporating the newly organized and synthesized information into one knowledge base;
 - f. recognizing that existing information can be combined with original thought, experimentation, and/or analysis to produce new information.

7. **Recognize the economic, legal, social and ethical issues of access to and use of information** by:
 - a. recognizing that access to information can be constrained by both political and economic factors;
 - b. citing and acknowledging sources appropriately;
 - c. understanding the principals of intellectual property, copyright, and plagiarism, and acting ethically in light of them.
8. **Recognize the unique characteristics of the body of knowledge within a specific discipline** by:
 - a. distinguishing among primary, secondary, and tertiary sources and their use;
 - b. understanding the relationship between currency and relevance;
 - c. analyzing and comprehending the organization and structure of the literature in a particular discipline;
 - d. being able to transfer skills from familiar resources to unfamiliar ones.

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