

Guest Editorial

With the ascent of intangibles (knowledge and information), the need for information literacy (IL) programmes has become a pre-condition for developing independent learners and critical thinkers. Information is a critical resource today for managing success at home and work. In fact, information is a source of instant power as it facilitates decision-making, problem-solving, and action-taking. It eliminates uncertainty and makes the stakeholders confident. IL is the ascent of library instructions through user-education as library is not the only source of information today. The Internet and the Web are mines of valuable data, information, and explicit knowledge. E-mail, scholarly discussion lists and similar other services are empowering the end-users with tacit knowledge as well. But even then, the gap between the info-rich and the info-poor is widening day-by-day in the developing countries. IL is the ability to make sense of information for managing success and staying ahead of change and competition.

In this context this Special Issue of *DJLIT* on Information Literacy has been brought out. The issue contains eight papers from eminent persons in the field of LIS. Mokhtar and Majid are of the view that government involvement, equal emphasis on ICT and IL competencies, synergistic cooperation, and professional accreditation are a few means among others to develop effective IL guidelines and methods for imparting IL competencies. Constant learning, continuous review and evaluation for retaining the contextually relevant, and adapting to the changing environment are other essential conditions for developing the emerging information society. Jagtar Singh emphasises the sense-making approach to the concept and practice of IL. Building a case for information search process, he suggests that IL programmes must be based upon the complexity and diversity of user communities, and cultural hegemony and intellectual imperialism should not be allowed to prevail in these programmes. Wijetunge, after introducing the National Institute of Library and Information Sciences (NILIS), Sri Lanka and the IFLA/ALP 2004 IL Workshop, reports the positive impact of integrating information skills into Postgraduate Diploma in Teacher Librarianship. Encouraged by the marked improvement of postgraduate students in this pilot project, NILIS expects to introduce the empowering eight information skills in other courses also. Karisiddappa and Rajgoli feel that research in IL field is at preliminary stage in Asian countries. They report the findings of their case study of select library and information centres of higher learning and research in the Bangalore city.

Eisenberg believes that information, library, and education organisations have a responsibility to help people succeed in a complex and often overwhelming information world. For him, it is not enough to work one-on-one or to offer an isolated lesson in note taking or Web search engines. People need lessons in the full range of skills, delivered in the contexts of the overall information process, including relevant technologies, and based in real, subject area assignments. Accomplishing comprehensive, integrated IL instruction requires library and information professionals in collaboration with others to make a concerted and systematic effort to plan and deliver programmes in context. For Amudhavalli, IL is common to all disciplines, environments, and all levels of education. Developing lifelong learners is central to the mission of higher education institutions. She further emphasises that incorporating IL across curricula, in all programmes and services, and throughout the administrative life of the university, requires the collaborative efforts of faculty, librarians, and administrators. Ramesh Babu is of the view that IL guidelines can be reviewed, and changed (adapted) by librarians according to the priorities of their institution, so that IL elements can be better suited to local or national needs. The guidelines are a checklist of subjects to keep in mind during the planning and implementation of IL programme or to reinforce previous IL work. IL demands a new way of thinking about learning and teaching which may be in conflict with cultural standards and expectations concerning the roles of students and

educators. Incorporating IL across curricula, services, the collaborative efforts of faculty, librarians, lectures and by leading discussions. Ramesha feels that the developing countries with special reference to India have lagged behind in taking initiatives and carrying out projects for developing, promoting and implementing IL programmes and projects. Pointing to the IL situation in both academic and corporate context, he emphasises that without a push of external help through financial aid and professional expertise it will not be possible to develop IL and information infrastructure in India.

I sincerely hope that the papers in this issue of the *DJLIT* will go a long way to sensitise the stakeholders about the concept and practice of information literacy across the globe.

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