

Information Literacy

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Information Literacy: An Overview

by InfoScienceToday.org

The present times are called 'the age of information' for a good reason - the amount of information available far exceeds the amount of information that an individual or an organization might seek. Therefore it becomes necessary to discern between "useful information" and "irrelevant information". The ability to make this distinction, locate and identify the sources of information, critically evaluate the sources and share the information for a given need, is known as 'Information Literacy'. This knowledge is employed particularly in the field of research.

When one talks about information, it becomes necessary to identify under what category the information falls. For instance, information that would have been relevant a few years ago may now be obsolete. Also, it is important to note that information is not always created equal; two distinct sources may provide entirely different information regarding a single need. Thus, the source of information assumes as much importance as does the information itself. Useful information is that which is authoritative, reliable and current. Information seekers should be wary of biased and misleading information.

Information literacy skills find many applications. They are primarily applied for academic purposes such as presentations and research. However, they can be applied to any practical situation, especially when a decision is to be based on the available information only. The simplest example of information literacy skills application is casting a vote for a candidate in a democratic election. An informed citizen, or the one who has good information literacy skills, will be able to vote for the best candidate.

Information can be classified as popular (or pop), scholarly and trade; or as primary, secondary and tertiary. Popular information is that which is intended for entertainment purposes and may or may not be entirely accurate. Examples include popular magazines that target celebrity news and popular culture. Scholarly information is authoritative information that is found in journals pertaining to a certain field of study; for instance, scientific journals and publications are considered scholarly sources of information. Information accessed through a publication that falls into neither of these categories is most likely trade information. The second type of classification is based on whether the information has been sourced from the original text, a commentary on an original report or a summary of the original text, it may also be a compilation of the original text.

With a number of books, journals, periodicals and websites available for perusal, it has become difficult to judge whether a particular source is reliable or not. One can not always cross-examine the information obtained due to time constraints. This is when information literacy really helps; as any one who has good information literacy skills will be able make use of the resources available in the best possible way and in the least amount of time. Hopefully this [report on Information Literacy skills overview will aid you in your future literary studies and research](#).

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