

South African Online Users Group

Information literacy within a consortial framework

by

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Information literacy

“people trained in the application of information resources to their work can be called information literates. They have learned techniques and skills for utilizing the wide range of information tools as well as primary sources for molding information-solutions to their problems”(Zukowski, 1974)

Salience of information literacy for South Africa

- Social and economic divisions
- Imperatives of a democratic society
- Global “information society” challenges and opportunities
- National Plan for Higher Education

Contestations

- Many “literacies” [computer literacy, bibliographic literacy, information literacy, academic literacy]?
- Outcomes? How to measure “learning success”?
- Locus – who is “responsible”?
- Impact of technology [the “virtual library”]?

Western Cape approach

- Collaboration
- Western Cape Tertiary Institutions Trust



Adamastor Trust

Cape Technikon
Peninsula Technikon
University of Cape Town
University of Stellenbosch
University of the Western Cape

Senn Brevik Report, 1992

- Aim: Cooperative academic planning to achieve transformation with limited economic resources
- Limitations:
 - uneven access to information
 - ineffective management of information resources
 - restricted “information literacy” of both faculty and students

Guiding Vision

(Senn Brevik, 1992)

The vision . . . is to promote information literacy and economic development for the area by providing information to users in a form they want, when and where they need it. Inherent in this vision is the right of all citizens to be able to access, evaluate, and effectively use information that can contribute to improving their quality of life and economic well being. Accordingly, the vision embraces the concept of a **single Western Cape library collection** that is housed at different locations with all resources accessible to anyone who has need of them.

Pilot project in information literacy

“Only access to a rich base of information resources in many formats can allow a move away from the traditional lecture/textbook/short loan/reserve teaching approach that currently characterises the great majority of course delivery styles. A rich base of information resources is necessary to design assessments that develop students’ information accessing and evaluative skills”

INFOLIT Project

- promoting the concept, value and importance of information literacy in the context of globalisation and redress to key players in the region
- undertaking an assessment of the varying levels of need for information literacy education in the region
- conducting an audit of existing programmes to identify those successful initiatives which must be spread across the entire region
- launching a series of pilot projects which explore and establish various means of spreading information literacy education in the region
- investigating information literacy models, programmes and initiatives in other countries that could be adapted to local conditions.

Impact

- Regional and institutional awareness of information literacy
- Capacity development
- Shared information literacy resources
- “Library” perceived as part of the academic “workspace”

Problems

- Territoriality – academics and library staff
- Perception –
 - “information” = book
 - “information literacy” = using computers
 - “library” = building where information is used

“Our economy . . . is a networked economy, that is an economy whose units of production, distribution, and management are organised in networks.” (Castells, 2000)

Challenges

- Economic and legal barriers
- Metaphors of searching
- Information retrieval technology
- Critical awareness of information
- Information culture and indigenous knowledge