

COLLECTION CONNECTION

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SPRING 2005

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The 5th Annual Ingram Library Lecture Series: Information Literacy and Assessment

Ingram Library is pleased to announce that Carolyn Radcliff will be our featured lecturer for the 5th Annual Ingram Library Lecture Series, which will be held on Wednesday, April 20th at 10:30 A.M. Radcliff is a tenured associate professor for Libraries and Media Services at Kent State University in Ohio. She has been a reference and liaison librarian for 14 years and has a long-standing interest in assessment and library effectiveness. Among her current assessment projects are the Wisconsin-Ohio Reference Evaluation Program (WOREP), for which she serves as co-administrator, and a federal-grant-funded project to develop an instrument for assessing information literacy skills, Project SAILS, for which her role is project administrator. She has published and presented in the areas of information literacy assessment, reference service, reference assessment, and government

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What We Talk About When We Talk About "Information Literacy"

On Wednesday April 20th, Carolyn Radcliff, our featured speaker for the 5th Annual Ingram Library Lecture Series, will present on "information literacy" issues in higher education. Although the term "information literacy" is pervasive in the library world, faculty from various academic departments may well wonder, "To what exactly does the term 'information literacy' refer?" and "What does 'information literacy' have to do with me, my students, and the courses I teach?"

What is information literacy?

One useful definition of information literacy comes from the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL): "Information literacy is a set of abilities requiring individuals to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information." Jeremy J. Shapiro and Shelley K. Hughes provide a more detailed definition in their article "Information Literacy as a Liberal Art," asserting that the term encompasses the following related "literacies":

- *Tool literacy* - The ability to use print and electronic resources including software.
- *Resource literacy* - The ability to understand the form, format, location and access methods of information resources.
- *Social-structural literacy* - Knowledge of how information is socially situated and produced. It includes understanding the scholarly publishing process.
- *Research literacy* - The ability to understand and use information technology tools to carry our research including discipline-related software.
- *Publishing literacy* - The ability to produce a text or multimedia report of the results of research. services and resources.

Why is information literacy instruction important?

We live in a time of proliferating information. The positive side of this phenomenon is that never before has so much information been readily available to the general public. However, this explosion of information, which is perhaps best typified by the sprawl of the Internet, has made sorting through the "junk" to get to the "gems" decidedly difficult. Students, many of whom think they are good researchers because they can type a couple words into Google and come up with 29,100,000 results, need to be trained how to navigate these vast and often confusing information domains.

Information literacy instruction is also important because it enables our students to become life-long learners, equipped with the tools necessary to address successfully the various information needs that they will be confronted with throughout their academic, career, and personal lives.

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documents. She has served in many local, regional, and national organizations, notably as president of the Academic Library Association of Ohio and chair of the ALA RUSA Access to Information Committee. She is book review editor for *Reference and User Services Quarterly* and serves as a manuscript reviewer for *Journal of Academic Librarianship*. She has an M.L.S. and a master of arts in communication, both from Kent State University.

Radcliff will give two talks. The first will highlight the convergence of some key trends affecting academic libraries today, including the emergence of the information literacy movement, the formalization and integration of information literacy instruction throughout the curriculum, the seemingly inexhaustible expectations for assessment, and the need to demonstrate the value of libraries and librarians in an increasingly online research environment.

The afternoon presentation will focus on Project SAILS, which is developing a standardized assessment of information literacy skills based on ACRL's Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education. The SAILS instrument has been administered to more than 32,000 students at 60 institutions, providing information about the strengths and weaknesses of students' information literacy skills. ■

Faculty/Graduate Assistant Checkout Agreements

Faculty members may permit their graduate assistants to check out items from the library using their UWG identification cards. To do so, the faculty member must fill out an agreement form and turn it in to the Circulation desk

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Scholarly Googling with "Google Scholar"

On November 22, 2004, Google announced the beta release of Google Scholar, a variation on their wildly popular Internet search engine. According to a company statement, Google Scholar is designed to limit search results to "scholarly literature, including peer-reviewed papers, theses, books, preprints, abstracts and technical reports from all broad areas of research." Good news indeed for scholars, instructors, and information professionals who are all too aware that online information is often less than scholarly and frequently a far cry from authoritative. Grading papers in our offices or chatting with colleagues, it is not unusual to find ourselves shaking our heads and bemoaning our students' tendency to rely solely on Internet search engines to meet their information needs rather than on library subscription databases and print sources. Google Scholar, with its popular, simple, and familiar interface and its focus on scholarly content, seems to offer a potential solution to this "problem." Or does it?

How it Works

Although Google's not naming many names, the company is working with various academic publishers, libraries, archives, universities, and scholarly societies to make scholarly materials more accessible. By limiting searches to these realms, Google Scholar eliminates a lot of the "smog" that chokes and clouds the academic information superhighway, making it easier for users to find quality scholarly content. As one of my students noted upon learning about Google Scholar, "That's way cool."

What is not so cool, however, is that many Google Scholar users will have very little understanding of how the search engine works, which may in turn have a negative effect on their research projects. For example, though Google Scholar searches a lot of material, it is still only searching through a small subset of scholarly literature. There's the danger then that students, many of whom are already laboring under the delusion that "everything" is online anyway, will believe they have conducted an exhaustive search on their topic simply by using Google Scholar.

There's also bound to be some confusion around the type of information that appears in the search results list. Many Google Scholar users will expect that the search engine will always and only provide them with full-text access to scholarly materials. This is not the case. Although most searches will yield some full-text articles, more often than not, the results list will be dominated by citations and abstracts. The reason for this is that Google Scholar searches a great deal of metadata about scholarly publications, which it gleans from library catalogs and publishers' databases. The ability to search this information can be great in the sense that users can learn about the existence of texts that might be helpful to their research. But many users will find themselves decidedly confused about how to actually find the text that they now know exists out there in the world, somewhere, probably at a library far, far away. What might not be immediately apparent to a lot of people is that in order to access the content of a book that exists only in print format or a scholarly article cloistered behind a subscription pay-wall, university community members will need to use their library anyway, searching for the book in Ingram Library's catalog, for example, or accessing the full-text of an article in one of our subscription databases. All of which would lead me to the question,

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The value of information literacy then--learning how to learn, how to solve problems, how to think critically, and how to use information effectively and responsibly--cannot be underestimated. Indeed, the topic itself touches upon issues and questions that are fundamental to the missions and curricula of academic institutions everywhere:

- What should a college education be about?
- What should be taught?
- What should students know or be able to do upon graduation?

How we answer such questions will of course be influenced by a variety of factors, including our disciplinary affiliations, the theoretical assumptions and paradigms that inform our pedagogical practices, and our positionality within departmental and institutional power structures. However, studies on the amount of informational content students retain from their course work has shifted the pedagogical practices of many instructors across disciplinary lines. *The Bulletin of the American Association for Higher Education (AAHE)* reports the following:

"The curve for forgetting course content is fairly steep: a generous estimate is that students forget 50% of the content within a few months A more devastating finding comes from a study that concluded that even under the most favorable conditions, students carry away in their heads and in their notebooks not more than 42% of the lecture content. Those were the results when students were told that they would be tested immediately following the lecture. These results were bad enough, but when students were tested a week later, without the use of their notes, they could recall only 17% of the lecture material" ("Information Competence in the CSU").

The proliferation of information that is characteristic of the "Information Age" in addition to the evidence that suggests that students forget much of the information that they learn in their courses has led many educators to conclude that fostering students' ability to find, evaluate, and use information for themselves is a vital component of education at the college level. If students graduate from UWG without these basic information competencies, they will lack the necessary skills for success in any field. Even if they were able to accomplish the impossible and to remember 100% of the information they learned in their courses, without these basic information literacy skills they would still ultimately be at a disadvantage. Why? Because the rate of change in knowledge is so high in many disciplines today that the information students learn while in college is unlikely to be relevant or accurate after only a few short years. Our challenge as educators then is to equip students with the information literacy skills that they will need to navigate successfully their forever-shifting information-rich worlds ("Information Competence in the CSU").

What can I do as a professor to help my students become information literate?

1. Collaborate with your department's liaison librarian to craft courses and specific assignments that integrate information literacy competencies with discipline specific content.
2. Devise assignments that have specific information literacy learning outcomes. The following learning outcomes for curriculum integrated information literacy instruction were developed by The California State Information Competence Work Group and are a useful place to start.

The information literate student should be able to:

- State a research question, problem, or issue.
- Determine the information requirements for the research question, problem, or issue.
- Locate and retrieve relevant information.
- Organize information.
- Analyze and evaluate information.
- Synthesize information.
- Communicate using a variety of information technologies.
- Use the technological tools for accessing information.
- Understand the ethical, legal, and socio-political issues surrounding information and information technology.
- Use, evaluate, and treat critically information received from the mass media.
- Appreciate that the skills gained in information competence enable lifelong learning ("Information Competence in the CSU").

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3. Review ACRL's Information Literacy Standards for Higher Education:
<http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlstandards/informationliteracycompetency.htm>
4. View examples of how information literacy instruction can be integrated into any course in any discipline, from Accounting to Women's Studies. Useful sites to consult for information on how various academic departments integrate information literacy instruction into their courses and departmental objectives is California State University, Fullerton's Information Literacy Guide (<http://guides.library.fullerton.edu/infocomp/department.htm>) and the following CSU Information Competency site: (<http://hcom.csumb.edu/infocomp/links/>).

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--Christy Stevens

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signed by the faculty member and student. A link has recently been added to the Faculty Circulation Policy page that will open a pdf document to make the process a little easier. Some things to remember:

- A new agreement form must be turned in each academic term.
- Students must present the faculty member's ID card as well as their own at time of checkout.
- If the faculty member does not personally turn in the form, the Circulation department must obtain verification by phone directly from that faculty member before anything can be checked out.
- Faculty should check their library records periodically to see what is checked out to them.

If you have any questions regarding the policy, please contact Chris Carroll at ccarroll@westga.edu or at ext. 96503. ▪

--Chris Carroll

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“Why didn't I just use the library's resources in the first place?”

Here's another potential problem. Many of the webpages that Google Scholar pulls up in the results list give visitors to the site the option of creating their own individual subscriptions. Translation: “If you pay us, we'll let you see what we've got.” For Google Scholar users who are not affiliated with a university or other educational institution, this seems fair enough, but what might this mean for Google-loving, not-so-library-savvy students at UWG? Well, it's possible—probable even—that students might actually end up paying for materials that they could have accessed for free via Ingram Library's collections or Interlibrary Loan Service. As such, educating students about what Google Scholar does and does not do is important. It is not a comprehensive database nor is it primarily a full-text one. It provides a quick and easy way of searching for scholarly materials, but it does not make it particularly easy to access a lot of them. And although many of the articles one can find via Google Scholar are scholarly in nature, some, quite simply, are not. A significant advantage of Google Scholar over library subscription databases, however, is that after students graduate, they will still have access to Google Scholar from any computer with a connection to the Internet. But while they are here at UWG, our students would be better served using the print and electronic resources that the library pays good money for so that they don't have to. ▪

--Christy Stevens

Taxing Times--Online!

Ahh, springtime! That wonderful part of the year when we shed the cold darkness of winter and begin moving toward the bright liveliness of summer. The weather heats up, the sun shines a little more clearly, and of course, your government asks for your money. That's right! Springtime is taxtime! Employers and other agencies are required to send us our W-2 and other income declarative forms by the beginning of February. We are then able to file them away until the last minute, when we rush around trying to get all the forms we need together, fill them out, and get to the post office by midnight of April 15th.

But where can you get the necessary forms? Ingram Library no longer carries them in paper but has a great resource in their Tax Forms and Information web page (<http://www.westga.edu/~library/depts/govdoc/tax.shtml>). This page provides links to tax form pages from the federal government and from each of the fifty states (including those wonderful states that have no personal income tax). You can access not only the tax forms and publications but also links to the governing revenue agency for the federal government (IRS) and each of the states (in Georgia, the Georgia department of Revenue).

You can access both current year tax forms and older forms as well. There are forms to file for an extension, and the IRS and some states

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even have fill-in forms, where you can type your information right on the screen then print it out so it looks good. Unfortunately the fill-in forms won't do your calculations for you; they just accept the numbers you put in. There are also contact points for submitting questions, FAQ's, and other online forms of assistance.

So remember this April 14th, when you are looking for the tax forms and information you need, to try the Tax Forms and Information page (<http://www.westga.edu/~library/depts/govdoc/tax.shtml>) at Ingram Library, where getting to the forms you need is made easier, online.

Or you can use TurboTax, like I do. ▪

--*Michael Aldrich*

Avoid Fines: Get Your ILL Items in on Time!

Forget to turn in your ILL materials on time? Be aware that overdue ILL items now accrue fines of \$1.00 a day beginning the first day after the due date. What's more, there is no maximum fine, so you could really rack up quite a bill if you're not careful. This might seem like a harsh policy at first, but really it's about taking the necessary steps to ensure that we can continue to provide you with the high quality ILL service that you've come to expect. In order to deliver the best possible service to all of our patrons, we need to maintain a strong cooperative agreement with other libraries, which means that we need to return ILL items on time to the libraries that sent them to us. And we obviously can't do that until we get them back from our patrons. In short, returning your ILL materials on time helps us to help you.

A couple more things to keep in mind:

- You no longer have to fill out a form when you pick up your ILL items. Instead you check them out with your ID Card, just like you would items owned by Ingram Library.
- You cannot renew ILL items via the "My Account" screen in the library catalog nor by contacting the Circulation Desk. All requests for ILL renewals must be submitted through ILLiad.
- Finally, if you're looking for a book that Ingram Library does not own, search for it first using GIL Express. If none of the lending libraries in the University System own the item, then request the book via ILL. ▪

--*Angela Mehaffey & Christy Stevens*

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The Collection Connection is also available online at
http://www.westga.edu/~library/depts/news/colcon/past_issues.htm

Irvine Sullivan Ingram Library Directory

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