An information literacy policy for a small state?

Dr John Crawford
Founder Chair, The Right Information: Information Skills for a 21st Century Scotland,
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Information skills for a 21st century Scotland

An online information literacy community of practice
And he’s back!
Activities

• A low cost successor to the Scottish Information Literacy Project
• Founded in 2012
• Communication by blogging, email and twitter
• Face to face meetings twice a year
• Brings together a diverse range of library sectors and representatives from education and skills bodies
• Works with all relevant bodies
• Presentations, articles, blogging, advocacy, training packages
Players and partners

• Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC), Scotland’s information policy making body

• Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals in Scotland (CILIPS) the professional body in Scotland

• Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) the umbrella body for 1700 Scottish charities

• Young Scot – Information and Opportunities for young people in Scotland
Some achievements of members

• Scottish Government Information Service - 10 things – online social media training package
• Dundee College’s skills for learning, life and work course – employability and IL skills training
• Young Scot website
• Project Blaster - is an online information literacy resource aimed at 10-11 year olds
• SMILE – a HE IL resource
Bill Johnston
Information Literacy and Older People in Scotland

• What kinds of information are most relevant to older people?
• Which agencies collect this information and how do they use it?
• How can older people gain increased understanding and control over information about themselves and their interests?
• How can state and commercial plans to shift more and more information interactions online e.g. welfare benefit claims, be controlled so as not to disadvantage older people?
• What supports do older people need to get the best value from digital information services?
Lauren’s ILG funded Project

“Learning, lending, liberty? Can school libraries be engines for youth citizenship?”, will explore the role of school libraries in the wider school environment, including citizenship education. The project will identify how Scottish school libraries support young people’s political participation in two major political events – the Scottish Independence Referendum 2014 and the UK General Election 2015. The project will also explore the information and information literacy (IL) needs of young people outside the school environment, and identify how IL provision is vital in helping them become informed and meaningful participants in politics. Principal Investigator Lauren Smith (the University of Strathclyde) will work in partnership with Young Scot, a young people’s information charity; The Right Information, Scotland’s information literacy community of practice; and CILIPS.
Advocacy

• Presentations to fellow professionals
• Input to Royal Society of Edinburgh report. 2014 *Spreading the benefits of digital participation*
• Advising SLIC and CILIPS
• Cross Party Group on Digital Participation
• Meeting with Scottish Government Civil servants
• Meetings with Director of Digital Participation Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO)
• A cross sectoral conference – February 2015
Royal Society of Edinburgh report
Spreading the benefits: vision

• The report ‘vision’ states:
• ‘That everyone in Scotland has the information and digital skills required to participate in the digital arena and prosper from digital opportunities.
• That sustainable online and peer support for continuing learning and development of information and digital skills throughout all stages of life is in place.
• That information and digital skills are embedded across the curriculum and from pre-school to tertiary.’
Spreading the benefits: public libraries

The role of public libraries in the digital inclusion agenda is recognised:
‘As a valuable resource in the drive to full digital inclusion, libraries must be supported to maintain and increase their capacity to provide public access to the online world’
Spreading the benefits: training teachers in information literacy

- All Education Faculties within Scottish universities should include components of information literacy, digital skills and computing science in their programmes of study for all primary and secondary teachers.'
A world of political engagement
Constitutional literacy?
And a new category of voters
And a new category of voters
The lessons of the Referendum

• A festival of information use – but old problems resurfaced
• Information literacy no longer a specialist topic
• The importance of 14-17 year olds. 89% of those surveyed had consulted key sources of information on the Referendum: https://www.aqmen.ac.uk/youngscotsurveyresults
The challenge of digital participation

• 22% of the Scottish population are not Internet users (about 1.3 million)

• UK ‘Digital by default’ programme – key services to be delivered online including social security benefits

• Scottish Government ‘digital first’ and a devolved training strategy (SCVO)

• A crisis requiring a response from the information sector and a devolved training agenda
The February 2015 conference

- Title - Information literacy in Scotland: challenges and opportunities
- Organised by SLIC – venue provided by Scottish Government
- Over 70 attendees. Conference introduced by Colin Cook, Head of Digital Strategy and Programmes, Scottish Government
- Speakers from LIS sector, Scottish Qualifications Agency, Young Scot, health sector, welfare reform, housing association
Key points from the conference 1

• Scottish Qualifications Agency National Progress Awards, Includes IL. SCQF levels 4-6
• Young Scot Digital Information Strategy – focuses on multi platform content. Inclusive agenda.
• Health Literacy Action Plan for Scotland 2016
• Emphasis on community health resources e.g. ALISS (a search and collaboration tool for health and wellbeing resources)
Key points 2

- Information literacy and welfare reform – need for strategic partnerships involving the LIS sector
- Housing associations – a key role in promoting Internet access and use
- Contacts made with whom we can work further
Conference findings

• Cross sectoral approach strongly supported by attendees
• Need for partnership working
• Importance of public libraries in delivering digital literacy skills
• Potentially divisive effect of digital by default strategies
• Lack of cohesion between central and local government
• Every local authority should have a digital literacy group
Lessons and suggested action points

- Scope of information literacy has been greatly extended
- Case for IL no longer has to be made
- Policy making, implementation and co-ordination are the issues
- A mapping exercise to review overlapping and comparable activities which would benefit from co-ordination
- Noting conference attendees who could contribute to further activity
- Drafting a policy statement on information literacy in Scotland aimed at decision makers
- Preparing a report on information literacy activity in Scotland
Meeting with SCVO

- Meeting with Chris Yiu. Director of Digital Participation / SCVO 7.05.15
- SCVO has funded 58 small projects targeted at disadvantaged groups - not libraries
- SCVO planning a library of resources
- Involve SCVO in C of P
- Establish a SCVO/C of P working group to progress inter alia a joint statement on IL
Digital Scotland Participation Advisory Group meeting 4.6.15

- A meeting with the Cabinet Secretary for Culture
- An opportunity to bring information literacy to the digital agenda in the presence of the minister
- Minister showed a very positive engagement with all the items at the meeting including IL
- An opportunity to engage with other players in the digital participation agenda
- The Scottish Government should support a further conference in 2016 and the minister should be asked to be the main speaker
- An opportunity to build links and take discussions forward
- A joint C of P and SCVO working party should be set up to take forward the IL agenda
- A C of P working party should be set up to evaluate available IL learning materials
- Inviting a representative from SCVO to join the C of P meetings
- Inviting a representative from the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust to join the C of P meetings
What I said in February

• Understand better what we are all doing
• Identify areas of common interest
• Develop activities in co-operation with each other, rather than separately
• Be aware of each others R&D activities and try to work together
• Make information literacy a national activity
Big lessons

• Information literacy is about:
• Nationality
• Political engagement
• Partnership and collaboration
• Playing a long game
• Is there similar evidence in other countries?
Questions?

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CI\textsc{LIP} Conference 2016

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