

INFORMATION LITERACY







By Ashley Wilson

Information science is a meta-field that draws from the concepts, principles, and theories of other disciplines of knowledge. Information literacy is a subfield within information science. Bawden and Robinson (2012) define information literacy as the, “ability to identify an information need and to locate, evaluate, and effectively use that information for the issue at hand (p. 289)”. Cassell and Hiremath (2013) outlined a six-step strategy based on Eisenberg and Berkowitz’s Big 6 approach to information literacy. Libraries can assist with a variety of information needs. Those needs can range from resource selection, writing help, technology and software assistance, and more. Steps one, two, and three are the most common steps for the librarian to interact with the information seeker. [Reference and user services](#) similar to those needed to assist a patron in steps one, two, and three are critical to have in the field of information science. Steps four, five, and six involve applying the resources found to the information need. Services in the library such as the Studio, OIT Lucky 7, and the writing lab are places where patrons can go to seek help in applying the information.

Step 1. Identify an information problem. During this step, the patron is in search of help and must not only recognize they have an information need, but they must also be able to communicate that information need to be able to efficiently locate, evaluate, and use the information that was needed. The librarian can help define the patron’s information need. According to Bawden and Robinson (2012), an information need, “is part of the overall information behavior and can be expressed as I want to know... (p.189)”.

Step 2. Determining the possible resources. As technology advancements have made more resources available, such as electronic journals and databases, new issues have arisen for information seekers. For example, patrons’ may experience information overload, making it hard to select the best resources to meet their needs. In an information environment replete with information sources, ranging in quality from high to low, a patron may have to sift through endless amounts of resources to find the most appropriate resource. To help locate and narrow down a seemingly limitless number of resources available to patrons. **Error! Reference source not found.** was derived from a LibGuide on searching at the University of Wisconsin, Green Bay (University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, 2013). **Error! Reference source not found.** helps patrons identify and create an information seeking strategy and determine which method of searching is best to pursue.

Figure 1. Identifying the Information Resource.

OneSearch	Library Databases	Worldcat	Research Guides	Internet Search	Google Scholar
					
<p>I am looking for a specific title.</p> <p>I am looking to use a variety of information sources, such as books, articles, or eBooks.</p> <p>I am looking for a specific title that UT owns in its collection.</p> <p>I am looking for a book or article from another UT System Library (i.e. Agriculture & Vet, Law, Medical, Music, Social Work, Space Institute, or Special Collections)</p>	<p>I am most interested in finding articles and scholarly resources.</p> <p>I want to do a concentrated search.</p> <p>I need to use a specialty database focused on a particular subject area</p>	<p>I am looking for a book that is not available at one of the UT Libraries.</p>	<p>I am looking for research help and resources that have been customized for my professional field.</p>	<p>I need to verify a quick fact.</p> <p>I am just looking to get an overview or introduction to a topic.</p> <p>I am looking for non-scholarly, open access information.</p>	<p>I want to see what other scholarly materials are available on my topic using the Google interface.</p>



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Step 3. Locating the sources. Figure 2 was derived from the current University of Tennessee resource diagram (University of Tennessee Libraries, 2011). It illustrates the location and availability of resources for patrons using the University of Tennessee libraries. Cassell and Hiremath (2013) encourage researchers to use limiters when searching a database. Limiters help narrow down the search results, such as by date, language, full-text availability, and peer-review status. If the searcher is using a website available on the open Web, Cassell and Hiremath (2013) suggest that the researcher examine the URL to see what it reveals about the website; for example, such as looking at the ending of the URL to see if it ends in .edu, .org, .com, or .gov. Also, it is important to look at the author's credentials when the website was last updated, and permissions or copyright information.

Figure 2. Searching for Resources at UT



Step 4. Using the information and extracting the information needed. After the patron has found the most reliable and relevant resources to meet their information needs, they must engage in reading, watching, or listening to the resource and extracting the pertinent information needed from the source to be able to answer the initial information need. Even though patrons have identified their problem (Step 1), they still might need help during the application process. For example, if a patron has never used iMovie before, then they would watch a brief tutorial on iMovie (Step 4). When the patron tries to create their own iMovie project, chances are it will not go as smoothly as the tutorial and the patron will need help. Luckily, there is a service in the library called the Studio, that is happy to assist them in their iMovie project.

Step 5. Organizing the material and presenting it. At this point in the strategy, the patron organizes the information from multiple resources. Those resource materials can include journal articles, websites, video clips, audio files, books, or eBooks. Using the iMovie example from step four, Studio staff can assist in helping the patron add video clips, audio files, and make other edits to the iMovie project during step five.

Step 6. Evaluating the product and process. The final step is the finalization and evaluation process. In this step of the example, the patron reviews the finished iMovie project ensuring that all video and audio clips properly align. Then the project is exported to the patron's medium of choice.

References

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