

# Information literacy and society: a systematic literature review LILAC presentation script

Key: **instructions for Bruce**, emphasise to audience or ad-libs

## Prelims (7 minutes)

### Slide 1 LILAC introducer slide

**Don't think I need to say anything here**

### Slide 2 Title slide

### Slide 3 Introduction, schedule

- This session is about *Information literacy and society – a systematic review*
  - Full report is available online **Don't read out the URL**
  - Two halves to this session:
    - What we found
    - Some discussions
- Thanks to MILA for commissioning the project, and to CILIP and CILIP ILG for funding it.
- Hence schedule:
  - half of session about the report **where I talk for about 20-25 minutes**
  - half discussing questions arising **where I'd love to hear your thoughts:**
- Introduction
  - Project team
  - Project aims
  - Research questions
- Methods – very brief run-through
- Some initial findings
- Some detailed findings
- Answers to RQs
- Discussions

### Slide 4 Discussion questions

- So to prepare for the second half, here are three discussion questions.
- For now, please write on padlets – **you can access them via the QR codes**
  - For those who don't have suitable devices, please use post-its
    - How do you define 'impact' in your work or practice?
    - What is the impact of IL on society?
    - How can we increase the impact of IL?
  - **Anything that comes out of this will be anonymous**, as you can see from responses from a dry-run.
  - You are welcome to start now **but we'll look at these in the second half.**

### Slide 5 Project team

- I'm Bruce Ryan – research fellow at Edinburgh Napier University – and my colleagues were
  - Peter Cruickshank (associate professor, researching information practices associated with engagement with digital systems)
  - Marina Milosheva (PhD student researching careers IL)

## Slide 6 Project aims

- large-scale systematic literature review of **socially impactful** IL research.
  - Filling two research gaps:
    - past reviews have tended to be small-scale or scoping studies
    - past research may have been overlooked at policy level, unlike **media** literacy.

## Slide 7 Research questions

- We were interested in IL research that is **socially impactful**, that is IL research that has beneficial outcomes beyond simply enabling people to get better grades. Hence these RQs:
  - What is the core research that investigates the role IL plays for different user groups in society?
    - How comprehensive is this core research?
    - Which themes are absent from this core research?
    - Which factors prevent these themes being researched?
    - Which themes are overrepresented?

## Slide 8 Research questions (cont)

- According to this core research, what are the barriers and enablers of shaping information literate populations?
- What research methodologies in this core research are most effective at delivering impact/societal change, and why are these methods effective?

## Slide 9 Methods

- I assume you know the mechanics of literature reviews, so all I want to show here are the keywords aimed at finding impactful IL research.
  - **We searched Web of Science and LISTA for ‘information literacy’ AND any of the keywords in the brackets** (assess, benefit, effect, evaluat\*, impact, indicator\*, measur\*, monitor\*, outcome, output, result)
- **Got 4627 items after filtering and deduplication.**
  - **Obviously there are related literacies such as media literacy, digital literacy, and less ‘academic’ terms** – what we see as IL, people may well see as problem solving – (how do I apply for XYZ online? How do I do ABC?) and may well not care about metaskills. **so other searches (and searching different databases) would probably have led to different findings**
    - We were specifically commissioned to investigate IL.
    - If we widened the search, we would have had even more items to filter and review.
- We then used ‘classes’ from CILIP’s 2018 IL definition to classify the remaining items.

**Bruce – do not read out this table**

Classification	Number of items
everyday life	356
citizenship	118
education	2825
- Tertiary	1993
- Secondary	127
- Primary	55
- Not specified/more than one	650
workplace	296
health	378
None/out of scope	1131

- From the classified items, we obtained a 197-item longlist, which was then whittled down to a 35-item shortlist for detailed review

## Summary of introduction

- So that wraps up
  - what we aimed to do: investigate **socially impactful** research
  - how we did it: literature review.

## Findings (7 minutes)

- I'll now talk about some initial findings, before going into key findings for each class.

### Slide 10 Initial findings

- Headline finding is that education is dominant in IL research.
  - **This is corroborated by LILAC: In both 2023 and 2024, presentations relating to higher education amounted to around 80% of the total.**

### Slide 11 Initial findings (cont)

- Within education, tertiary is dominant.
  - In keeping with our 'socially impactful' aim, some education items were about professional education/training
  - **The point is that IL education can have further beneficiaries: those who benefit from IL-ful professionals**
- Some other findings
  - Shortlisted items concentrated in Europe (including UK) and Americas.
  - They also concentrated in quantitative, discussion and mixed methods.
  - Possible geographic bias – of research or our methods?

## Summary of initial findings

- So I've just covered what we got from the 'mechanical part' of the project.
- Now I'll talk about some findings from detailed review of our individual classes.
  - This will concentrate on the enablers of and barriers to information-literate societies.

### Slide 12 Primary education findings

- Enablers of information-literate societies
  - delivering relevant facts to stimulate government action and funding
  - appropriate IL teaching frameworks and IT systems
  - teaching of critical thinking
- Barriers
  - inappropriate government action/lack of funding, leading to loss of librarians teaching IL skills in formative years
  - other unwelcome human actions: **war and oppression**

### Slide 13 Secondary education findings

- Enablers of information literate societies
  - spurs to undertake IL teaching
  - supportive school leaderships
  - 'scaffolded' teaching methods
    - **This is about IT systems underpinning learning systems, e.g. in virtual field trips**
  - taking advantage of suitable relationships within and outwith formal education
- Barriers to information literate societies
  - inappropriate teaching and examination policies and methods
  - 'contrary' human characteristics

- **People just want to be told the answers, not to have to think**

## Slide 14 Tertiary education and 'other' education findings

- Enablers of information literate societies
  - supportive university leadership
  - positive actions by university librarians and their colleagues
  - education around critical thinking
  - provision of suitable resources and staffing for IL teaching
  - collaboration between librarians and their teaching
- Barriers to information literate societies
  - not teaching the full range of IL skills (**am I in danger here of seeing IL as a process rather than a situated practice?**)
  - not using IL models
  - lack of resources, university support and collaboration

## Slide 15 Everyday life findings

- Enablers of information literate societies
  - national IL frameworks and relevant government action – **IL research can get into national policy areas**
  - improvements to teaching methods and programmes
  - working around socio-cultural and religious barriers – **see the list in Rahanu et al (2015)**
    - relevant **government action is recommended by all four shortlisted 'everyday life' items**
- Barriers to information literate societies can be manifold: Rahanu et al in particular show a wide range: low education achievement, low self-esteem, health, disability, age, gender, class, race/culture/religion
- **Library instruction and information literacy** annual series that has been going since 1973. It clearly shows that the geographical spread of IL research is increasing, but there is focus on the anglosphere/first world.

## Slide 16 Citizenship findings

- Enablers of information literate societies
  - 'good' parenting
    - That is monitoring children's internet use. (**I'm not a parent but that creeps me out!**)
  - national IL frameworks
  - co-ordination of support for national policies
  - advocacy of examination of new issues stemming from evolving technology
- Barriers
  - lack of relevant government action and policies
  - lack of updating IL teaching to take in modern developments and social needs

## Slide 17 Workplace findings

- Enablers of information literate societies
  - workplace or in-work IL training,
  - context-specific IL frameworks – **because IL is a situated practice**
  - relevant communities of practice – **again situated**
- Barriers to information literate societies
  - poor presentation of information
  - overwhelming other aspects of work roles
  - lack of training, immediate resources and support resources
  - various demographic factors
    - **being male, being older, teaching subjects other than English, teaching role and rural/urban location**
  - possibly over-generalised IL frameworks.

There were some papers covering the impact of already having IL, rather than methods to develop IL, e.g. **being IL-ful enables abilities to use clinical software.**

## Slide 18 Health findings

- Barriers to IL research
  - lack of objectivity in research.
- Enablers of information literate societies
  - **Many of which are reminiscent of 'education' findings**
  - service-learning methods including group projects
  - 'scaffolded' teaching methods
  - collaboration between librarians and teaching colleagues
  - compulsory undergraduate IL education
  - socio-demographic factors
    - **educational levels; family income; living alone, with a spouse or with children; and chronic disease status. Being female was associated with higher HIL**
  - demonstrating the relevance of IL to practice
- Barriers to information literate societies
  - lack of respect for librarians
  - lack of university IL education – **this may go hand-in-hand with lack of IL education at and before university**
  - lack of government action on misinformation
- socio-demographic factors such as being older or male

### Summary of detailed findings

- So that covers some of the findings from the detailed review of our classified items.
- I'll now talk briefly about answers to our RQs.

### Slide 19 Answering RQ1

1. What is the core research that investigates the role IL plays for different user groups in society? AKA social groups
  - a. How comprehensive is this core research?
    - shown by range of theme-groups, e.g. policy and governance, education, digital and IT, health, various professions, personal and citizenship topics
  - b. Which themes are absent from this core research?
    - Examples of lacunae: citizenship, primary education, public libraries, mis/disinformation, **longitudinal studies that might show outcomes**, no-textual info.
    - You may be curious why citizenship appears in both sub-answers.
      - There is research on personal/citizenship topics such as **IL needs of forced migrants, senior citizens' IL and IL and advocacy**.
      - However, **only 118 items of 4627** after filtering were classified as 'citizenship'.
    - **I was surprised how little mis/disinformation IL research came up, and almost nothing on AI!**

### Slide 20 Answering RQ1 (cont)

- c. Which factors prevent these themes being researched?
  - We don't have robust answers.
  - It might be because of reticence and/or people have no opportunities to say why they don't research things
- d. Which themes are overrepresented?
  - Tertiary education

### Slide 21 Answering RQ2: enablers of and barriers information literate societies

2. According to this core research, what are the barriers and enablers of shaping information literate populations?
  - Our 'barrier' findings include
    - **government inaction/underfunding**
    - **inappropriate teaching**, along with lack of support and lack of early-education IL teaching
      - it's worth noting here that (as far as I know) the UK does not mandate teaching IL and related skills. However other countries (e.g. Singapore) do.
    - **overwhelming other aspects of work**
    - **poor information-presentation**
    - **socio-cultural barriers faced by migrants.**
  - Our 'enabler' findings include (in brief)
    - **national IL frameworks**
    - **improvements to teaching**
    - **teacher-librarian collaboration**
    - **overcoming cultural and demographic barriers**
    - **relevant government and school leadership action**
    - 'good' parenting
    - advocacy
    - and workplace training.

## Slide 22 Answering RQ3: research methods for societal change

3. What research methodologies in this core research are most effective at delivering impact/societal change, and why are these methods effective?
  - We couldn't find robust answers to this, but we did find quite a few 'how-to's for IL education, e.g.
    - IL education and training should be structured, integrated and collaborative – and yet compulsory, while taking into account learners' needs and existing abilities

### Summary for RQs

- So that summarises the overall answers to our RQs.
- Now I'd like to explore your thoughts and experiences.
  - We have about 20 minutes for this.

### Discussion (20 minutes)

If there is space, get the audience to split into 3 groups – 1 per question, choose their own facilitators, who can then add to the padlets.

## Slide 23 Discussion questions

- Point of these is to explore what the findings mean for you, whether they match your experiences
- Anything that comes out of this will be anonymous, as you can see from responses from a dry-run.
- I will share the completed padlets via LILAC, and blog about them on our research group's blog.

### Bruce – do not read out URLs!

- How do you define 'IL impact' in your work or practice?
- What are the impacts of IL on society?
- How can we increase the impact of IL?

## Slide 24 Thank you

- Reminder – report is available online
- Here's a reminder of the team, with our contact details
- You can see more of our research-group's work on our blog.
- Thank MILA, funders
- THANK YOU

## Slide 25 LILAC closing slide

Don't think I need to say anything here