

What exactly is information literacy? Isn't it just for new students?

The American Library Association has developed a definition of information literacy:

*"To be information literate, a person must be able to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information. Producing such a citizenry will require that schools and colleges appreciate and integrate the concept of information literacy into their learning programs and that they play a leadership role in equipping individuals and institutions to take advantage of the opportunities inherent within the information society. Ultimately, information literate people are those who have learned how to learn. They know how to learn because they know how knowledge is organized, how to find information, and how to use information in such a way that others can learn from them. They are people prepared for lifelong learning, because they can always find the information needed for any task or decision at hand."*

Created by the Association of College & Research Libraries, the [Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education](#) outlines key concepts and best practices of information literacy instruction.

- Authority Is Constructed and Contextual
- Information Creation as a Process
- Information Has Value
- Research as Inquiry
- Scholarship as Conversation
- Searching as Strategic Exploration

This instruction can be for faculty or students because these are principles that should be used regardless of academic background or field of study.

While many of today's young adults have grown up as digital natives, this does not mean they have received instruction on how to spot unreliable information on the Internet. A study by Stanford researchers found that as many as 80% of students surveyed were unable to identify a sponsored website. Read more about this study on the Stanford's graduate school website: [Stanford research](#). This can also be a challenge for transferring and non-traditional students, who may be struggling with gaining word processing skills at the same time they are learning the background information they need in their field of study. What do you do for students who may be duped by fraudulent websites? They need to become information literate.

As more information becomes accessible online and a larger population are able to create and share content, guidance becomes more necessary than ever when learning to assess the reliability information. Instruction librarians are information professionals who give students tools to help them in their research process. Some of these tools include face-to-face and Zoom instruction, library guides for specific courses, tutorials, embedded librarians for online courses, and a learning module in Blackboard. SE librarians recently added a chat service for students as well. This widget, found on the library's home page, can utilize screen sharing through Zoom to

show students how to find appropriate library resources. This can even be done on a cell phone!

If you read the definition above, you can see that information literacy is a lifelong process, not just for students who are beginning their academic careers. As methods of communication and information sharing evolve, it becomes necessary to continue learning how to use these methods. Libraries can also promote information literacy in the campus community by supporting intellectual freedom, assisting faculty with research, and increasing accessibility of resources through rigorous collection development and library sharing programs like Worldshare.

To schedule an instruction session or request information literacy tools for your course or department, please contact any of the SE librarians or fill out an instruction request form through [this link](#).

For an example of an information literacy instruction tool, try this 15-20 minute tutorial on website evaluation found [HERE](#). A certificate of completion is available at the end of the lesson along with quiz question scores.

A web page has been created for this blog on the library website, [located here](#). Feel free to use and share the blog with others, November's blog post should be added shortly. If you have suggestions about topics for later blogs, email me at the address below!