



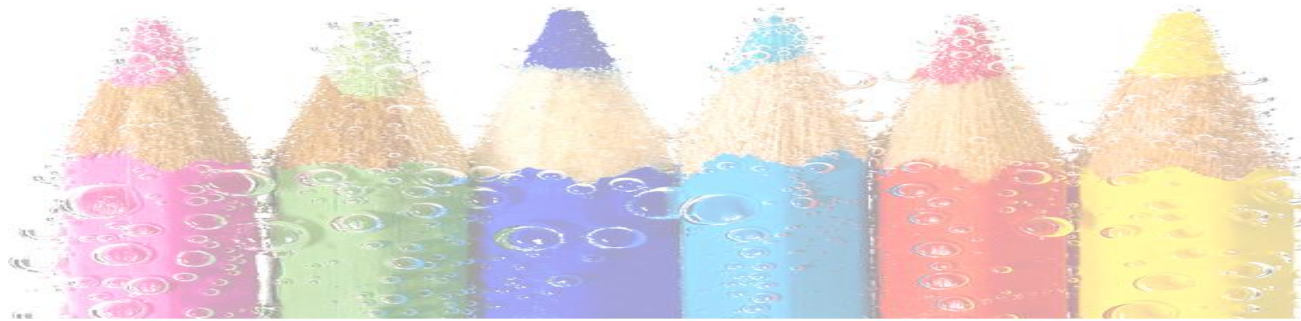
Literacy in social media environments: time to abandon or re-examine information literacy?

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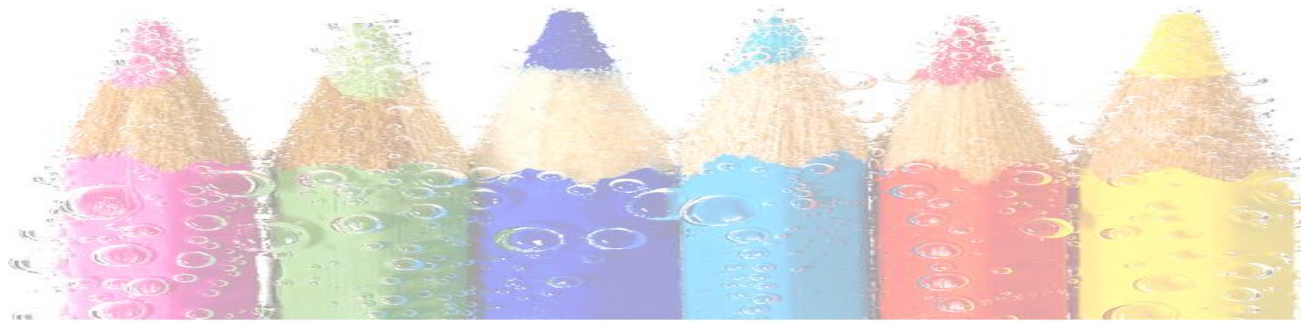
Aim of contribution

- the adequacy of the IL concept :
 - a flood of alternative and competing concepts and terms that supposedly prepare users to cope with intricacies of new social media environments in a much more efficient way than IL does



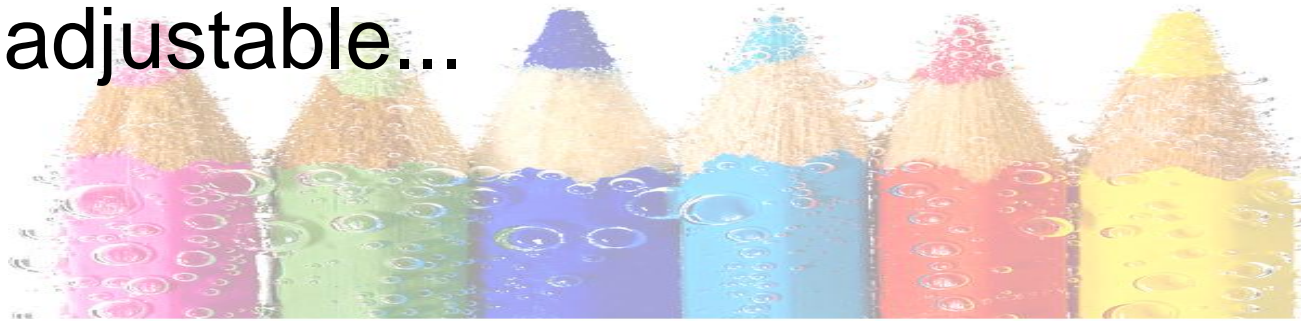
“Definitional core” of IL

- core elements are always centred around:
 - ***finding*** (including similar concepts of accessing or locating),
 - ***evaluating*** (entailing critical judgement) and
 - ***using*** (including communicating, sharing and producing).



Evolution of IL

- IL always deals with information world of it's time; always a reflection of current information environment
- in xx years we will have a different information environment...but still we will need information
- the conceptual core is adaptable and adjustable...



Shifts in information environments – shifts in IL

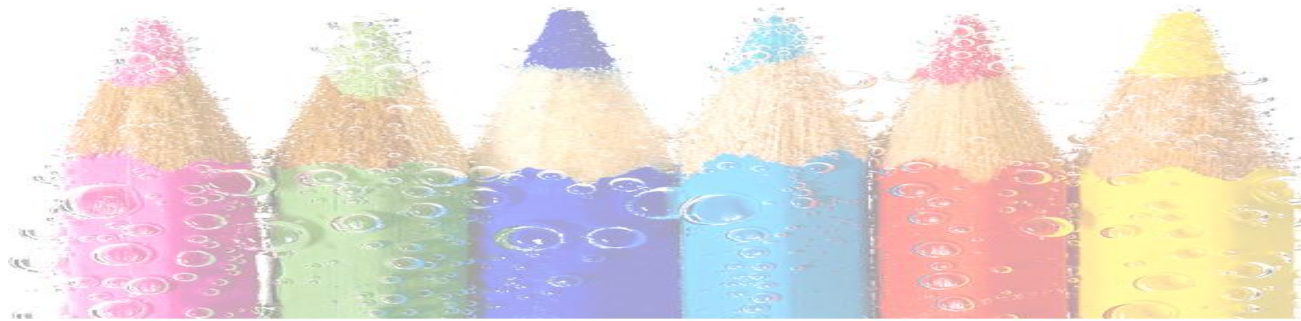
1. IL as library-focused user education (tools-oriented)
2. Web 1.0; internet-focused (skills-oriented)
3. Web 2.0: ? evaluation- and community/socially-oriented

(adapted from M. Farkas, 2011)



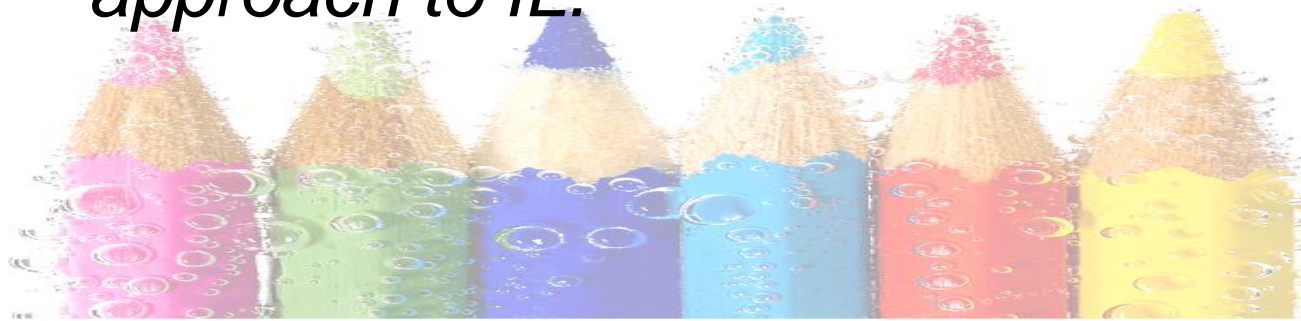
The rationale of IL

- the rationale of IL lies not only in digital, or print, or collaboratively constructed information but in the continuum of information artefacts, be they oral, digital, printed or collective in nature.
- still, there are some reasons to criticise and object existing IL practices / research



Critical aspects

- prevailing IL practices concentrate on finding information
- prioritizing information evaluation or production.
 - *the question is not whether IL as a concept should be abandoned, but whether IL practice and research should embrace a more **holistic** approach to IL.*



IL for media-saturated environments

- information environments are much less stable, centralized, structured or linear:
 - *Fragile authority and fluid trust*
 - *Communicating information*
 - *managing and organizing information*
 - *Social dimensions of IL*

Fragile authority, fluid trust

- information environments include sites of information not stewarded by traditional information gatekeepers
- IL practices should focus more on evaluating information, not just in its traditional and common form (e.g. scholarly articles, web sites etc) but by including new information genres
- authority or credibility can only be scrutinized by popularity markers.
- pitfalls of determining authority and establish trust in print- online- and social environments should be a firm part of current IL conceptualizations.

Communicating information

“besides reading, the notion of literacy embraces the idea of writing”

– Hulvila

- Instead of just running through diverse citation styles more time should be spend on explicating creation of information and how one can express his/herself within new information or media landscapes.
- extends to discuss issues online identities
- make users think about positive and negative aspects of contributing to digital conversations which has consequences for privacy and identity in the digital environment

Social dimensions of IL

- existing IL models and frameworks are dominantly concerned with documents; the centre of information activities and processes are documents and document-like objects that have to be searched, accessed, evaluated, used etc.
- user as an individual working with documents
- in contemporary environments users are discovering, evaluating, using and producing information within networks and communities.
- Humans and communities – function as information sources, filters, digesters and co-creators.

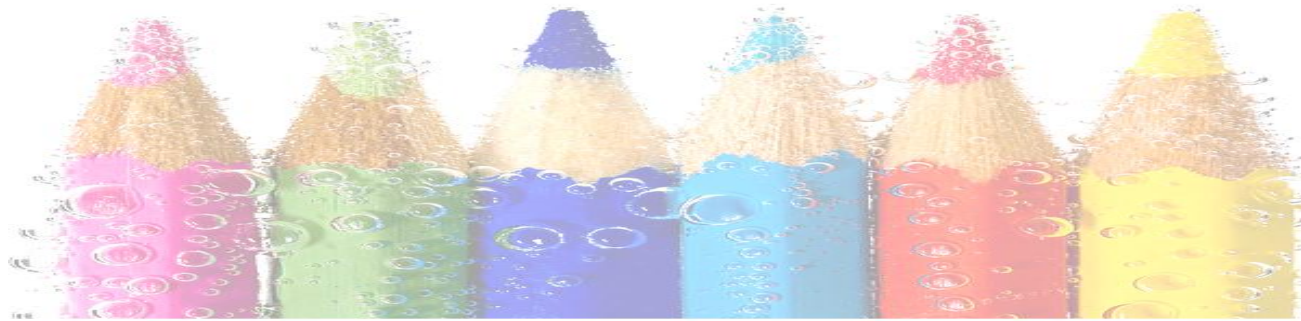
Conclusion

- initial question: “Is IL still relevant and meaningful as a 21st century literacy”.
- not IL itself is problematic, but a lack of social and collective and collaborative dimensions in finding, evaluating, using or communication information.
- Instead of being conceptualized as an individual competence, it should be perceived as a social, participative, communicative phenomenon.



Conclusion

- primarily, a holistic approach to IL in social media environments implies a shift towards social dimensions and practices in IL
- if we manage this shift, IL still has a chance





**Thank You!
Questions?**

Images:
www.flickr.com