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editors' note

Welcome to this special issue of the *Art libraries journal*. We have wanted for some time to cover the theme of information literacy within the field of art and design librarianship, because we have thought it important to acknowledge and explore some of the differences that we experience in this aspect of our jobs when compared to librarians working in other library and information sectors. We have also felt that this has been a rapidly evolving area and that mapping some of the significant changes it has undergone in recent years would be of use to our readers. Finally, this issue recognises the growing importance of information literacy and its centrality in the role of many art librarians, particularly those working in academic settings[1], as well as its strategic value to libraries and their parent institutions, and to society as a whole.[2]

We all know that art librarianship is 'different' but sometimes it is difficult to identify and evidence exactly how and why it is so and what these differences are. Publications like *User education in art and design: theory into practice* (1980) and, more recently, *Information competencies for students in design disciplines* (2007)[3] are milestones in the long journey undertaken by art librarians in their attempts to develop both theoretical and practical models of information literacy specific to art libraries and their users. However, there is enormous scope for learning from, and to exchange ideas and approaches with the wider information literacy and education community, and we would like to mention here the important work of groups like IFLA's ILS, IAIL, ILG, NFIL, and specialist journals (JIL, CIL) and conferences (ECIL, LILAC, LOEX).[4]

We also had to struggle with issues of terminology and definition. Topics that we wanted to discuss included a wide range of teaching and learning activities taking place in libraries or involving librarians: library orientation and inductions; research skills training; lectures, seminars, workshops and other forms of formal or informal teaching; one to one support; independent learning and peer-led learning; information literacy frameworks and programmes; curriculum design and delivery; innovative pedagogies; object based learning. Would a more encompassing title like teaching and learning in art libraries give a better idea of the territory that we wanted to survey? Should visual literacy, or other forms of literacy (digital, media, etc.) be mentioned explicitly? Is user education and training too narrow a term, maybe obsolete? What about library orientation, bibliographic instruction or information skills training? We concluded that these were all activities within the scope of current expanded definitions of information literacy, which include multiple literacies, and that this term sufficiently represented all the subjects that we aimed to cover.

The selection of articles that we have commissioned for this themed issue offers a critical look at how we develop and deliver information literacy in art librarianship today. In doing this we present some of the innovative thinking, practices and strategies flourishing in UK and US art libraries, commencing with a personal viewpoint by Annamarie McKie, a reflection on her own professional evolution from art librarian into educational developer at the University of the Creative Arts. Duncan Chappell of Glasgow School of Art provides a thorough and enlightening literature review around the subject. The practicalities of providing information literacy to art and design students are addressed in the articles from Ashley Peterson (Tufts University) and Larissa Garcia (Northern Illinois University), and from Ellen Petraits from Rhode Island School of Design. In addition, the ARLIS/NA *Information competencies for students in design disciplines* are reviewed and discussed by way of a 'ten years on' reflection from one of its original authors, Barbara Opar (Syracuse University). Amanda Meeks of North Arizona University writes a comprehensive article on teaching visual literacy in art and design librarianship and this is complemented with a 50 year content analysis

1. Often as 'teacher-librarians' embedded within courses and academic programmes, a somewhat ambiguous status in the UK where librarians are not usually part of the faculty staff, as opposed to the situation in the USA.

Similar developments can also be seen in the museum sector, where collaboration and even integration between libraries and education departments to develop enhanced public programmes is a growing trend.

2. The Information Literacy Group (ILG), a special interest group of CILIP, is currently redrafting CILIP's definition of information literacy, a key element of its 2020 strategy, while in the UK academic sector, *The SCONUL Seven Pillars of Information Literacy: Core model* were published in 2011 (see: https://www.sconul.ac.uk/sites/default/files/documents/coremodel.pdf). In the USA ACRL has recently developed the *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* (2016), discussed in detail elsewhere in this issue p. 73 and p. 80.

3. Mike Avann and Kath Wood., eds. (1980) *User education in art and design: theory into practice.* Newcastle-upon-Tyne: ARLIS. The ARLIS/NA *Information Competencies for Students in Design Disciplines* (2007) are discussed in detail in this issue p. 86.

4. IFLA Information Literacy Section http://www.ifla.org/information-literacy; International Alliance for Information Literacy (IAIL) http://enil.ceris.cnr.it/Basili/EnIL/index.php?id=iail-international-alliance-for-information-literacy; Information Literacy Group (ILG) http://www.cilip.org.uk/about/special-interest-groups/information-literacy-group; National Forum on Information Literacy (NFIL) http://

of literature around visual literacy from Alan Michelson (University of Washington). Liz Lawes and Tabitha Tuckett provide a current overview of object based learning and object literacy practices at University College London, and the issue is rounded off with Leo Appleton and Elizabeth Staddon looking at strategic approaches put in place at University of the Arts London to facilitate the development of librarians as arts educators.

The first idea for this special issue came from a discussion between the co-editors at a LILAC conference dinner (Dublin, 2016), and we hope that this should prove auspicious. We would like to thank L. Chizu Morihara, Coordinator of ARLIS/NA Teaching SIG, Duncan Chappell, Eamon Tewell, Stephen Bury and David Senior for their suggestions and insights into our subject. We are particularly grateful to our authors for contributing such a noteworthy collection of papers. There is much to stimulate and inspire all those art librarians who are involved in teaching and learning and we hope that you will read this issue with interest and find something to take back to your own library environments and your teaching practices.

infolit.org/; *Journal of information literacy* (JIL) http://ojs.lboro.ac.uk/ojs/index.php/JIL; *Communications in information literacy* (CIL) http://www.comminfolit.org/index.php?journal=cil; European Conference on information literacy (ECIL) http://ilconf.org/; Librarians' information literacy annual conference (LILAC) http://www.lilacconference.com/; Library orientation exchange (LOEX) http://www.loexconference.org/

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