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## Book review

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Chan, L. et al. 2002. Budapest Open Access Initiative. New York: Open Society Institute. Available at: <http://www.soros.org/openaccess/read.shtml> [Accessed: 18 November 2015]

**Goldstein, S. (ed) 2020. *Informed societies: Why information literacy matters for citizenship, participation and democracy*. London: Facet Publishing. 272pp. 978-1783304226. £74.95. Pbk.**

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This work has eleven chapters. The preliminary pages contain biographies of the contributors to the book. The book begins with a foreword by Lisa Janicke Hinchliffe and an introduction by Stéphane Goldstein.

Information Literacy (IL) is one of the key terms in the digital space. Citizens need to learn how to learn. Familiarity with IL skills improves the people's knowledge. With the advent of the internet and related dissemination of misinformation, disinformation and correct information, critical digital literacy is clearly necessary. As an international medium, the internet has a key role in developing democracy among individuals and users of the World Wide Web. Learning IL competencies can help democracy: as Gianfranco Polizzi points out in the first chapter, critical digital literacy matters for democracy (p.1). Some insights from political research are mentioned in this work (p.8). Although in political education studies the term political literacy has been considered as a necessary condition for engaging in democracy, it seems that political literacy overlaps with IL, as noticed on page 9.

In the second chapter, Andrew Whitworth discusses the discourses of power, information and literacy (p.25). Critical political IL education should not only be considered by librarians: it is also essential to pay attention to this in the wider context of the information society. In this chapter, Whitworth also explains theories of discourse by demonstrating that the ideas of Jürgen Habermas, Mikhail Bakhtin and Michel Foucault all have saliency for considering the political implications of literacy and IL. Consideration of this subject by librarians can assist them in gaining new viewpoints on political aspects of IL in the information society worldwide.

Andrea Baer, in chapter 3, offers a broader approach to IL. She puts forward the significance of personal beliefs and social identity for information behaviors (p.47) versus traditional approaches to IL. As noticed by Baer, 'we need new ways of engaging in civic life, and new ways of engaging with our students, regardless of their political views or their backgrounds' (p.49) – it seems that IL education needs to shift in accordance with the societal context.

Fake news and disinformation as central concerns in an information society are considered by Stephan Lewandowsky in chapter 4. This chapter is entitled 'The "post-truth" world, misinformation, and information literacy: a perspective from cognitive science' (p.69), and the writer of this chapter explores how fake news and propaganda affect the truth. Lewandowsky cites some evidence to emphasise that the process of 'inoculation' or 'prebunking' can prevent people being misled in misinformation environments (p.79). IL can be used as a tool for the vaccination of people against fake news.

In the next chapter (p.89), Jesús Lau and Alton Grizzle demonstrate the historical evolution of the concept of media literacy and IL (or media and information literacy, MIL). A glance at the foundational characteristics of IL and media literacy at Figure 5.1 (p.95) can help readers to

acquire rich data on both areas. The authors take a brief look at 'The Five Laws of MIL' (see figure 5.2, p.97), which was proposed by Grizzle and Singh (2016). They believe that information studies, especially IL, and media and communication studies, can have an impressive impact in developing human rights. The authors end the chapter by mentioning meetings and conferences on MIL which have been held all over the world.

In chapter 6, John Crawford explains national IL activities. The backstory of IL and national policy making is explored in this chapter. The question, 'Is it possible to evaluate national information literacy policies?', by giving some performance indicators about the assessment of IL policies, is answered by the writer.

'Information literacy as a growth pillar for a fledgling democracy' is the title of chapter 7, by Reggie Raju, Glynnis Johnson and Zanele Majeb, which considers IL challenges in South Africa from the viewpoint of political democracy. School and public libraries' strategy for IL and their challenges in South Africa are considered in chapter 7.

In chapter 8, Geoff Walton, Jamie Barker, Matthew Pointon, Martin Turner and Andrew Wilkinson (p.149) explain the significance and importance of information discernment as a subset of IL and as central to enabling young people to make informed judgements about the information they encounter. They believe that context is a central factor in making judgments about information. Encountering a 'blizzard' (p.151) of online information and misinformation is a major reason for people to achieve the capacities and skills related to information discernment.

'Libraries and democracy: complementarity in a regime of truth' is the title of chapter 9 which is written by Hilary Yerbury and Maureen Henninger. And in chapter 10, 'the Scottish public libraries welcome Syrian new Scots: a transition from being a refugee to becoming an active part of the community' (p.181), Konstantina Martzoukou describes the information needs of Syrian refugees in Scotland. Martzoukou explores the experiences of Syrian refugees encountering information in a new socio-cultural environment. Finally, in chapter 11, Bill Johnston considers 'Information literacy, lifelong learning and the needs of an ageing population' (p.207).

As teachers of IL, we encounter students and faculty members who are sophisticated members of an information society. The complexity of teaching IL in academic environments is obvious for me as an educator of IL in Iranian academic and educational institutions (see Marefat, Mansourian, & Zerehsaz, 2018a; Marefat, Mansourian, & Zerehsaz, 2018b). On the other hand, as IL educators we should try to teach people how to learn and how to find and evaluate information in society at large, and it seems that the complexity of teaching IL may increase in this context. This issue is related to psychological factors which influence information and IL: indeed, every reader of the book could observe these factors at play in some chapters of the work. More broadly, people need to learn how to be good citizens and what constitutes democracy. Educating people in society may be more difficult than within a strictly academic context. The book provides much information about democracy and its relationship with IL.

This book is aimed at everyone considering IL at the societal level, but librarians in academic and educational institutes might benefit the most from it, because of the practical examples of using IL in different situations provided by the different authors. This book is highly recommended for knowledge and information science researchers, librarians and IL educators who want to enrich their thinking about IL and its relationship with democracy in information societies.

## References

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