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The Irish Information Literacy Project: the Gradual Building of a National Policy for Information Literacy

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The Irish Information Literacy Project: the Gradual Building of a National Policy for Information Literacy

*Philip Russell & Jerald Cavanagh
European Conference on Information Literacy
Istanbul, October 23rd 2013*



Overview

- Background / context
- Work of WGIL / TFIL
- Challenges / issues
- Future directions
- Q&A

Irish context...



Background

- Overview of information literacy in Ireland
 - diversity of different sectors
 - difficulties in defining IL
 - lifelong learning / e-citizenship
 - lack of a national policy for IL

Background

•In 2006 the Library Association of Ireland (LAI) passed the following motion:

‘That this Annual General Meeting ...adopt a standard for Information Skills; lobby to ensure government is made aware of the need for, and value of Information Skills; lobby government to recognise and affirm the role of Libraries in the delivery and maintenance of Information Skills’

(proposed by the Executive Board of the LAI)

Working Group on Information Literacy (WGIL)

- Established by the LAI (January 2006)
- Cross-sectoral approach
- Progress IL on a national level
 - examine international best practice / standards
 - produce sectoral-based report
 - review IL provision in Ireland

WGIL – Terms of Reference

- To recommend appropriate guidelines for the practical development of information skills education
- Strategies for promoting and raising awareness
- Further development opportunities for research and action
- Actions for strategic positioning of information skills in context of lifelong learning on government agenda

WGIL Report

•Library Association of Ireland: Working Group on Information Literacy: Review of Cross-Sector Activity 2006-2008 and Initial Recommendations for Further Action

- report of IL activity over a two year period
- case study approach
- 10 key recommendations for the advancement of IL

WGIL Report

•Key recommendations

- adopt CILIP definition / ANZIIL standard
- increase advocacy of information literacy
- promote inclusion of IL in education at all levels
- continuing professional development
- establish an IL group within LAI
- provide funding to advance IL
- further research into IL activities across all sectors

Task Force on Information Literacy (TFIL)

- Established in 2011
- Progress WGIL recommendations
- Investigating best practice IL activities
- New report – BILI: Building IL in Ireland

TFIL – revised action plan

- Key priorities

- develop IL activities more widely in education
- build relationships with international groups
- raise awareness of the strategic value of IL
- formulate a national IL policy

Challenges

- Diversity of Irish library sector
- Lack of funding – schools level
- Multiculturalism / internationalisation of Irish society
- No national strategy for IL
 - more integrated approach
 - importance of IL amongst policymakers
 - role of Library Association of Ireland

Future directions

- More collaboration and cooperation
 - national / international
 - funding opportunities
 - EU Tempus Project
- Lobby at political level – importance of IL for education, the economy and society

Future directions

- Formal unified strategy for IL / aligning with national objectives
 - National Strategy to Improve Literacy & Numeracy among Children and Young People 2011-2020
 - National Expert Advisory Group on IL
- Successful development of national IL frameworks in the UK
 - Scottish Information Literacy Project (SILP)
 - Welsh Information Literacy Project (WILP)

“A more integrated approach amongst all stakeholders is imperative in terms of ensuring the development of a national policy for IL”

(O’Brien & Russell, 2012)

