

2016-03-22

## Library Association of Ireland Task Force on Information Literacy (TFIL): Challenges and New Directions

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### Recommended Citation

Russell P. et al (2016). 'Library Association of Ireland Task Force on Information Literacy (TFIL): Challenges and New Directions'. *Librarians Information Literacy Annual Conference (LILAC)*, University College Dublin, 21st-23rd March 2016.

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# Library Association of Ireland Task Force on Information Literacy (TFIL): Challenges and New Directions

LILAC Conference  
University College Dublin  
March 21–23, 2016  
P.Russell, C.McGuinness, J.Burns



# Agenda

- Background
- National perspective
- Merger with Library Association of Ireland Task Force on Literacy and Numeracy
- Future directions
- Q&A



# Background

- ▶ Library Association of Ireland (LAI) Task Force on Information Literacy (TFIL) formed in 2011
- ▶ Advance recommendations of the LAI Working Group on Information Literacy (WGIL 2006–2008)
- ▶ TFIL – representatives from all LIS sectors in Ireland



# Members of the Taskforce

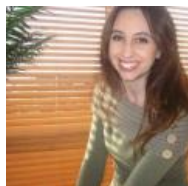


## Academic & Special Libraries

- ▶ Philip Russell, [Convenor] Institute of Technology Tallaght, Dublin
- ▶ Claire McGuinness, University College Dublin
- ▶ Jane Burns, Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland

## School Libraries

- ▶ Katherine Ryan, St. Andrew's College Dublin



## Government

- ▶ Muireann Tóibín, Revenue Commissioners
- ▶ Ann O'Sullivan, Houses of the Oireachtas
- ▶ Joan Ward, Libraries, Local Government Management Agency

## Public Libraries

- ▶ Brenda Carey, Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council
- ▶ Emer O'Brien, Tipperary Libraries
- ▶ Laura Joyce, South Dublin Libraries
- ▶ Catherine Gallagher, South Dublin Libraries





# Key Objectives

“that this AGM calls...to adopt a standard for information skills; lobby to ensure government is made aware of the need for and the value of Information skills; lobby government to recognise and affirm the role of libraries in the delivery of maintenance of information skills”

Library Association of Ireland, AGM, 2005

- Review and develop IL provision in Ireland
- Raise awareness of the strategic value of IL
- Formulate a National IL policy
- Examine international best practice/standards
- Build relationships with cognate groups

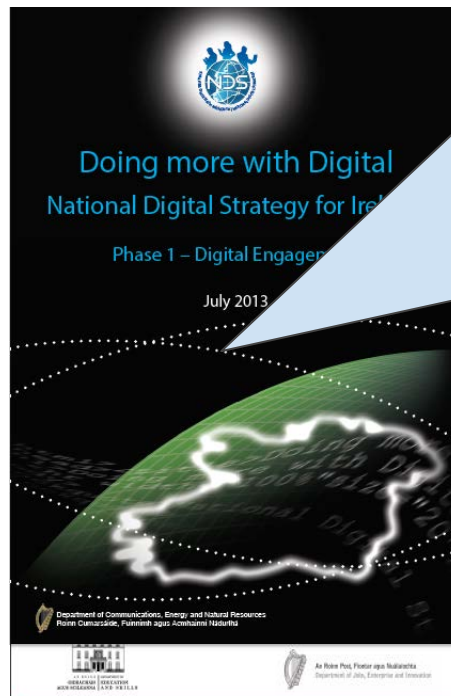


# Challenges

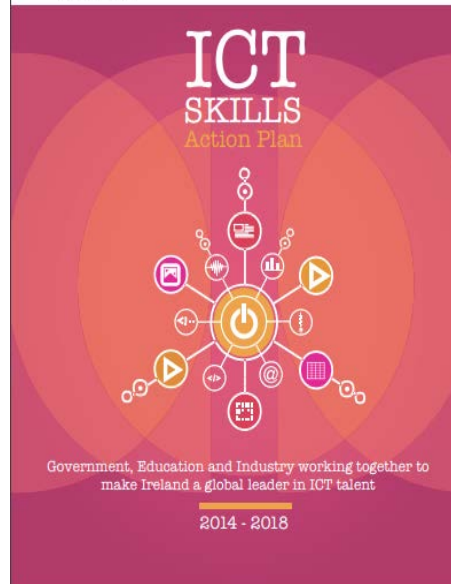
- Diversity of Irish library sector
- Lack of funding
- No cohesive national strategy for IL education
  - more integrated approach
  - more recognition from policymakers
  - role of Library Association of Ireland



# Setting the National Agenda



*“Literacy includes the capacity to read, understand and critically appreciate various forms of communication including spoken language, printed text, broadcast media, and digital media. Throughout this document, when we refer to “literacy” we mean this broader understanding of the skill, including speaking and listening, as well as communication using not only traditional writing and print but also digital media”*







# Common Themes

- Preparation for the workplace; economic focus; filling the skills gaps; developing an entrepreneurial spirit.
- Increase in employment and advancement opportunities, especially among young people.
- Importance of education & training; lifelong learning; improved educational experience for students; training & upskilling for teachers, especially in ICTs.
- Active & rewarding participation in civic society; engagement and empowerment.
- Better infrastructure supporting expansion of economy & educational opportunities: focus on digital.



# Setting the National Agenda



A striking aspect of the current national strategy framework for a digitally enabled and empowered society is that there is...

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CURRENT OR POTENTIAL  
ROLE OF LIBRARY &  
INFORMATION SERVICES  
IN ANY OF THESE FOUR  
DOCUMENTS**

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# National Response to DL Imperative

**Teaching and Learning in Irish Higher Education: A Roadmap for Enhancement in a Digital World, 2015–2017 (National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching & Learning, March 2015)**

**All Aboard: Digital Skills in Higher Education (Funded by National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching & Learning, 2015)**

*“there will be evidence of coordination across the range of actors including librarians, academics, IT specialists, learning support staff in the provision of a seamless digital experience for students “*  
*(p.ix)*



# Where Are Library & Info Services?



Last national, cross-sectoral Library & Information Services strategy document was *“Joining Forces”* (1999)

Recently – **“Opportunities for All: The public library as a catalyst for economic, social and cultural development. A Strategy for Public Libraries 2013–2017”**





# What can Libraries do?

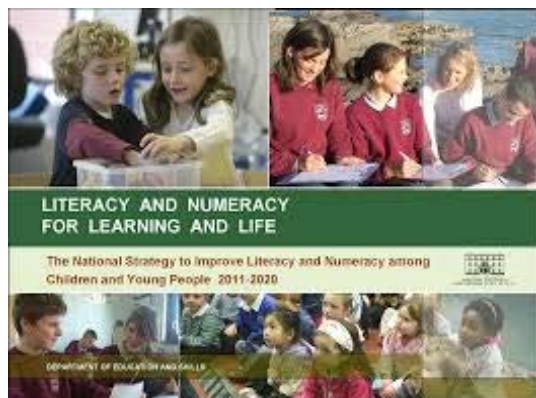
“Libraries have a clear role to play in all three components that constitute literate societies, including enabling populations to acquire and use basic skills, providing an abundance of printed matter, written records and visual materials, and facilitating text-based information lifelong learning opportunities.”

“librarians need to reach out to governments, civil society organizations, educational institutions and other professional associations to raise awareness and ensure a better understanding of the role that libraries play in the evolving knowledge societies.”



# Major National Initiatives

Literacy & numeracy a major concern – OECD reported recently that 1 / 5 university graduates can manage **basic** literacy and numeracy tasks, but struggle with more **complex** tasks



*“Libraries are a valuable resource for families and communities” (p.21)*

**Library & Information Services identified as supporting several objectives in this document**



# Task Force Merger – Why?



**LAI Taskforce on Literacy:** “To create a clear picture of the family, children & school library services being provided by public library services across the country”; “To develop a line of dialogue with the Dept. of Educ. & Skill’s teacher inspector section, to explore how collaboration between schools & the public library service in Ireland can be standardised & formalised to deliver on the details of the objectives of the strategy.”

- **Continue the work of both task forces** by reviewing & collating best practice across the sector.
- **Pursue practical & cross–sectoral collaboration & support** to further the goal of an integrated national strategy for key competencies.
- **Create an action plan** for the development of these competencies.
- **Engage in ongoing advocacy, promotion & dissemination** to raise national awareness.



# Literacies Taskforce



## January 2016 – Revised Terms of Reference

- Review and collate best practice initiatives in relation to literacy, information literacy and digital literacy across library and information service sectors in Ireland.
- Foster collaboration and support for the development of literacies across all sectors of the profession.
- Propose an action plan for the development of these competencies at local and national level across library and information service sectors in Ireland.
- Advocate, promote and disseminate information in relation to local, national and international activities.





# Action Plan

- Address the “non–role” of libraries in the National Agenda.
- Why are we not on the agenda–some soul searching?
- Raise awareness on local and national level within our professional body, the LAI.
- Identify key influencers and stakeholders in this arena and make offers of collaboration.
- Complete review of best practice.
- Review all relevant national strategies in light of best practice landscape.



# Action Plan

- Identify potential synergies between current best practice and national strategic goals.
- Identify practical and achievable service development in all or part of the sector.
- Develop a practical and collaborative approach to cross sectoral awareness of key literacy, information and digital literacy competencies and how library and information services can continue to support these competencies more effectively.



# Next Steps

## The Taskforce will:

- Establish a practical plan that professionals from all library and information sectors can identify with.
- Act as a support and point of contact for LIS professionals.
- Produce promotional material and highlight local, national and international initiatives / best practice through various LAI communication channels.
- Address staff upskilling and competencies by providing training through cross-sectoral and inter-agency collaboration.
- Ensure a focused approach to advocacy – relevant government departments, local government, state agencies, charities and educational institutions, identifying appropriate synergies.
- Ensure LIS professionals are an integral part of any discussion, strategy or plan regarding ‘literacies’ in Ireland.



# Literacies Task Force Vision

## Vision in Context of National Literacies Task Force

- Recognition of the range of information literacy skills needed
- Continue the work already undertaken
- Practical and cross sectoral approach
- Promotion of inclusiveness & alignment with national policies
- Active engagement in research & collaboration



# Digital Literacy Agenda

- ▶ Making Connections and Engagement
- ▶ National Forum/National Agenda
- ▶ International Representation
- ▶ The Role of the Library & Information Professional from all perspectives



# Thank you – Questions?



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