

Project Name

IL Fox – The Virtual Toolbook for Information Literacy Initial Research

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Campus Albany, University at

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Tier Tier One

Project Team

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Overview Summary

Development of an online information literacy (IL) toolbook to promote information and digital fluency. This tool will fill a void for students as well as faculty by incorporating key information concepts at multiple levels (e.g., proximity searches).

Outcomes Summary

In addition to conference outcomes, a digital online dictionary/encyclopedia promoting information literacy and digital fluency was developed.

Project Abstract

Overview

Research into the development of an online information literacy dictionary/encyclopedia following the Creative Commons standards.

Project

Description The project consists of preliminary research into the development of an online information literacy (IL) toolbox to promote information and digital fluency. This virtual resource will contain several pedagogical elements - a dictionary, encyclopedia, and instructional modules. This will include definitions of pertinent words and terms from information literacy curriculum, e.g., Boolean operators and digital piracy. Each definition will link to a supporting page providing examples, web links to relevant sources, and instructional assignments.

At this time there is no resource that provides a central informational utility for supporting student information literacy needs. This tool offers to fill a void for students as well as faculty at both the statewide and national levels. It will incorporate key concepts at multiple levels. First, it will provide a dictionary defining pertinent words and terms from IL curriculum, e.g., Proximity searching and Cyberterrorism. Second, it will provide an encyclopedia in which each dictionary definition will link to a supporting page detailing each term, with an overview, history, and relevant examples. Additionally, the entries will contain sections designed to spark deeper thinking for student exploration by hyperlinking to relevant sources (for example, the page for Fair Use could link to the online video A Fair(y) Use Tale). Lastly, for pedagogical purposes, the resource will provide access to term-specific lesson plans (best practice examples) to foster sharing and collaboration across SUNY campuses and beyond.

IL Fox Objectives

Users of this resource will

- Learn IL terminology, history, context, and applications
- Have 24/7 access to a centralized IL resource
- Have shared access to instruction materials for use in teaching

Research Outline

The grant will support the exploration of several aspects of this initiative – content development, technical and maintenance considerations, cost analysis, assessment, and collaborative partnerships. Details relating to each of these aspects are as follows.

Content Development: To determine strategies for the selection of IL words and terms to be defined, a review of the literature and professional organization standards regarding information literacy (e.g., ACRL, AASL, and other discipline-specific associations) will be conducted. We will also conduct literature reviews to identify domain-specific experts, for example, Creative Commons' Lawrence Lessig. These experts may serve as content creators for IL Fox. Research efforts will also focus on the development of replicable templates that will collectively form IL Fox, and which could also be used for other instructional purposes. By the end of this project, we will have a preliminary compilation of words and terms to be defined in IL Fox.

Technical and Maintenance Considerations: There exists a wide range of technology applications for the development of IL Fox. This component of the research will explore which tools will be the most effective for learning outcomes. This will address design options (both surface and infrastructure), technology requirements, and collaborative enhancements. For the design options, we will look at the use of wikis versus content management systems, as well as customizable applications. The technical requirements component will investigate concerns relating to server space, open source operating systems, and interactive possibilities. Maintenance concerns will be researched for both long-term and short-term sustainability of IL Fox. This will include exploring the possibility of recruiting "definition adopters" to maintain specific content in the toolbox.

Cost Analysis: In this component of the project examination, we will conduct an analysis of the costs of developing IL Fox. This will address future personnel, technology, and assessment expenditures for the creation of IL Fox.

Assessment: This component of the research aims to identify assessment tools for measuring the outcomes of IL Fox use. These will include the use of peer-reviewed tools such as PRIMO and MERLOT. Additionally, the

investigators will develop a survey to administer to students and faculty of information literacy courses that will help to determine content strengths and weaknesses. This empirical evidence will help in the development of IL Fox. This research will also investigate the development of pre- and post-tests that will measure student engagement and the effectiveness of IL Fox, including usability testing.

Collaborative Partnerships: The ultimate project promises strong collaborations across campuses, SUNY Centers, information-related professional organizations, and commercial entities. During this research project information literacy experts will be identified for future collaborations. An evaluation of potential partnerships will include organizations such as COIL, SUNYLA, ACRL, and AASL, as well as on-campus IT and discipline-specific departments, including the College of Computing and Information departments. Interviews with vendors (e.g., Springshare, EBSCO) will provide insight into software and other application possibilities. Partnerships will be engaged at every level of the project, from content development to assessment with a focus toward ensuring long-term sustainability and expansion into a more dynamic, interactive site.

Reports and Resources

- [Project final report](#)
- [Project outcomes report](#)
- [CIT 2013 Handout](#)
- [SUNYLA 2013 Poster](#)

Connected Learning Models

- Faculty/Librarian Collaboration

Instructional Design

- Online Education
- Student Learning Support