

Information Literacy Skills of Portuguese LIS Students: Some Topics on Evaluation of Resources Credibility

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Overview

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1. Information evaluation criteria used by undergraduates

Authority, page layout, site motive, URL, cross-check ability, user motive, content, date, professionalism, site familiarity, process and personal beliefs

(Dochterman, Stamp, 2010)

Credibility is a perceived quality, an human perception, that results from evaluating multiple dimensions simultaneously, including trustworthiness and expertise as two key components (Tseng, Fogg, 1999)

Content, including topicality of sources, is the most important criteria. Reputation/credibility was the third most frequently mentioned criterion (10%). Accuracy/validity is also an undervalued criterion (3%) Twait (2005)

2. Evaluation Competencies in Information Literacy Frameworks

The Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education (2000)

Standard three: evaluation of information and its sources.

Performance indicator 2: “information literate students must be able to **articulate** and **apply** initial **criteria** in order to **evaluate information** and its **sources**”.

Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education (June 2013)

Six threshold concepts: scholarship is a conversation, research as inquiry, **authority is contextual and constructed**, format as a process, searching as exploration and information has value

Australian and New Zealand Information Literacy Framework
(2004)

Core standard three: the **information literate person critically evaluates information** and the **information seeking process**.

[It includes **assessment** of the information **access tools**, the inherent characteristics of **information** and also information seeking **process** and **search strategies**].

The SCONUL Seven Pillars of Information Literacy: Core Model For Higher Education (2011)

Identify (ability to identify a personal need for information)

Scope (can assess current knowledge and identify gaps)

Plan (can construct strategies for locating information and data)

Gather (can locate and access the information and data they need)

Evaluate (can review the research process and compare and evaluate information and data)

Manage (can organise information professionally and ethically)

Present (can apply the knowledge gained)

3. Sample and Methodology

- Portuguese results from an international survey on LIS students' information literacy skills - focus on issues regarding credibility.
- Portuguese study was conducted by the Information Science Department at the School of Industrial Studies and Management from Polytechnic Institute of Porto.
- Online survey completed by students (march-may 2013).
- Sample: 65 undergraduate students of our department | 48 complete questionnaires were analysed for this paper.
- Female: 60%; Male: 40%; 1st year: 50%; 2nd year: 19%; 3rd: 31%.

4. Results on information evaluation skills: a focus on credibility

(Q6a) Starting and searching information for course related assignments

Determining whether a website is credible or not is difficult

43% agree or strongly agree

34% disagree or strongly disagree

23% neither agree nor disagree

Sorting irrelevant results and find what they need is difficult

33% agree or strongly agree

48% disagree or strongly disagree

31% neither agree nor disagree

Finding sources to use "out on the web" is difficult (e.g. Google etc)

81% disagree or strongly disagree

15% neither agree nor disagree

4% agree or strongly agree

Figuring out where to find sources in the library is difficult

60% disagree or strongly disagree

31% neither agree nor disagree

8% agree

(Q6b) Preparing course-related assignments

Evaluating the sources I've found is difficult

44 % agree or strongly agree

29 % disagree or strongly disagree

27 % neither agree nor disagree

Knowing when I should cite a source is difficult

48 % agree or strongly agree

31 % disagree or strongly disagree

21 % neither agree nor disagree

Integrating different sources from my research into my assignment is difficultt

29 % agree or strongly agree

46 % disagree or strongly disagree

25 % neither agree nor disagree

Taking notes is difficult

21 % agree or strongly agree

58 % disagree or strongly disagree

19 % neither agree nor disagree

(Q8) When you find a source through the Library (books or articles from library databases), do you consider

How current the source is

21% Almost always; 42% Often; 27% Sometimes; 8% Rarely; 2% Never

Author's credentials (e.g., where he/she works)

6% Almost always; 48% Often; 21% Sometimes; 23% Rarely; 2% Never

Whether the content acknowledges different viewpoints

8% Almost always, 44% Often; 25% Sometimes; 21% Rarely; 2% Never

Whether the author gives credit for using someone else's ideas

13% Almost always, 54% Often; 25% Sometimes; 6% Rarely; 2% Never

Whether it has a bibliography/reference list

6% Almost always, 50% Often; 27% Sometimes; 13% Rarely; 4% Never

Whether an instructor mentioned using this source

21% Almost always, 33% Often; 40% Sometimes; 2% Rarely; 4% Never

(Q9) When you find a source "out on the Web" (e.g., .com or .gov sites), do you consider

How current the web site is

40% Almost always; 31% Often; 23% Sometimes; 4% Rarely; 2% Never

Author's credentials (e.g., where he/she works)

15% Almost always; 44% Often; 25% Sometimes; 13% Rarely; 4% Never

Whether the content acknowledges different viewpoints

8% Almost always, 40% Often; 29% Sometimes; 8% Rarely; 4% Never

Whether the author gives credit for using someone else's ideas

15% Almost always, 48% Often; 35% Sometimes; 2% Rarely; 0% Never

Whether the Web site has links to other resources on the Web

13% Almost always, 50% Often; 29% Sometimes; 8% Rarely; % Never

Whether an instructor mentioned using this source

15% Almost always, 46% Often; 27% Sometimes; 13% Rarely; 0% Never

4. Concluding remarks

Portuguese results show an image of the information activities and preferences from a sample of LIS undergraduates, information professionals of the future and by now representatives of the Google generation.

They exhibit information behaviour typical of their generation with direct implications on the approach to information credibility issues: great confidence in their abilities to deal with information, especially in Web environment. In a library context, they do not feel so comfortable.

When presented with some difficulties, the most frequent option is to neither agree nor disagree, meaning they are not conscious of their skill limitations or that they do not want to formally express them.

On the credibility assessment, students report evaluating important criteria to assess the information source, whether in a library context or in web environment. Further studies should confirm its real application

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**Thank you!
Obrigada!**

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