



INFORMATION LITERACY GROUP VISION 2025 STRATEGY

1. Background

The Information Literacy Group leads debate and exchange of knowledge in all aspects of information literacy (IL) through:

- ◆ providing a forum for thought leadership about emerging practices and topical issues related to IL
- ◆ disseminating information about new local, national and international IL initiatives
- ◆ encouraging the publication of articles, both nationally and internationally, which share new ideas, initiatives and experiences of IL
- ◆ collaborating and supporting others across all sectors of the information profession and beyond
- ◆ highlighting and promoting best practice in IL teaching and research.

The Group achieves these aims by:

- ◆ organising LILAC: the Information Literacy Conference. The largest IL conference in the UK, regularly attracting over 300 delegates
- ◆ publishing the Journal of Information Literacy (JIL) since 2007 - the peer reviewed platinum open access journal
- ◆ maintaining the Information Literacy website
- ◆ highlighting sector leading practice through the annual Information Literacy Award and Digital Award for Information Literacy
- ◆ maintaining an active email list: lis-infoliteracy
- ◆ organising meetings, seminars and training events
- ◆ providing a vehicle for sharing and disseminating useful resources
- ◆ responding to initiatives, consultations and white papers where appropriate
- ◆ working in partnership with other relevant organisations and agencies.

In 2018, the Group revised its [definition of Information Literacy](#), positioning IL as an essential capability relevant throughout all stages of life. The current focus worldwide on mis- and disinformation presents an obvious opportunity to promote

the need for skilled information professionals to drive the public development of essential information and critical literacy.

The coronavirus pandemic has underlined the crucial role of information literacy for an engaged and informed public. In a [statement dated 5 November 2020](#), CILIP called for “collective effort on the part of the public, public authorities and the media to avoid spreading disinformation about the virus” and for “the Government to work with CILIP to bring forward a public programme of support for health, digital and information literacy, so that individual citizens can be empowered to make informed choices both about their own welfare and the safety of those around them”. The IL Group issued its [own statement in July 2020](#), highlighting the role of library and knowledge specialists in moving education and training online. Throughout the pandemic Library and information professionals have been supporting our educator colleagues to enable remote learning, helping keep learners and teachers safe by limiting face-to-face contact during this unprecedented health crisis.

2. The challenges we face

The IL Group and LILAC committee have identified 5 areas of challenge that will be addressed over the terms of the Vision 2025 Strategy:

Challenge 1 : Making IL meaningful

IL has huge importance and impact on our everyday lives. Whilst those embedded in the world of IL recognise this, it is clear that the terminology, understanding and significance of IL is still not widely understood. Greater clarification and understanding of this agenda more broadly beyond the IL and information professional communities is critical to optimise its impact.

The challenge is exacerbated by the variety of terminology being used to describe other concepts, such as media literacy and digital literacy, that overlap with IL. This often leads to missed opportunities and duplication of work. There is also the risk that the valuable work of librarians and information specialists in this field is ignored, and our roles and expertise overlooked or narrowly defined.

Challenge 2 : Political Influence

IL has crucial societal importance and helps to underpin democracy by enabling citizens to be well-informed and to think critically. Because of this, IL is a serious political issue, and many public agencies, commercial organisations and civil society initiatives are starting to recognise this. However, there is still a huge amount to be done in the UK to heighten that recognition; to encourage government and other stakeholders to incorporate IL in their thinking, strategies, policies and practices; and to collaborate with stakeholders that are already doing valuable work in this area.

There is a need to firmly establish our leadership in IL, ensuring we can contribute our views and expertise when it is discussed or explored by stakeholders and more broadly in society.

There is a significant challenge in making the most of fast-paced and ever-changing political agendas (see Challenge 4: building capacity). It also requires defining or redefining our relationship with a wide range of stakeholders, particularly beyond the library and information professional world

Challenge 3: Inclusive IL

The diversity of our group, the profession and the communities IL serves must be addressed. The group believes IL is relevant and important for everyone and this provides an opportunity to lead the profession in its efforts to diversify. Ensuring we represent diverse perspectives will help to build our integrity as a Group, as well as allowing space for more nuanced conversations around, for example, IL and information privilege.

In addition to IL, we also have the potential to lead the conversation on open scholarship (including topics such as Open Access, OERs, and copyright literacy), which we believe are issues at the heart of ensuring there is equal access to information.

Challenge 4: Building Capacity

The IL Group is run by a limited number of volunteers who work in a wide range of sectors and in diverse roles. Our ambition and initiatives are sometimes hampered by limits on the time and resources we have available.

Currently as a sub-group of CILIP, we are reliant on CILIP members to provide our volunteers and committee members. Many of our working group members (for example, the LILAC committee and JIL editorial board) are not committee members, and are often non-librarians.

We need to be able to recruit and retain talented and enthusiastic IL practitioners (and more broadly anyone with a serious interest in IL), including those who are outside of the library and information professions and so are unlikely to engage with the professional body. We need to develop and devise a new structure that enables the aspirations of the group to be achieved.

The reintroduction of a form of group-only membership (the “non-practitioner member” in the [proposed CILIP 2021 membership model](#)) is a welcome development in some respects, however we are concerned that the cost of this membership is prohibitively high for people who may wish to work on IL initiatives, but not to be involved with CILIP as an organisation.

We will therefore seek to build capacity by planning a major restructure of the ILG

in 2021. We are currently working with CILIP to redefine our relationship with them in a mutually beneficial way.

Challenge 5: Supporting our Members

We know that librarians, library workers and information professionals face significant challenges in terms of their own capacity to keep their skills up to date, and to support IL in a rapidly-changing information environment.

The Covid-19 pandemic, and the pivot to online teaching and learning in educational institutions, is the latest and most obvious example of how information professionals are under pressure to develop and to support their institutions with new ways of working.

3. Our capability

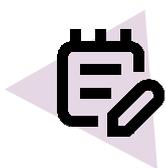
To meet these challenges, we can make use of our capability as a Group in the following areas:



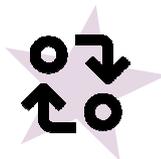
Community: We have access to a broad community of CILIP members and non members. We have the ability to consult and to broadcast information, using our social media, the IL website, and the lis-infoliteracy mailing list.



Influence: We have among our members and supporters high profile figures, including library directors and key researchers and practitioners in the field, who are respected as voices in the IL community, both within the UK and internationally. We have slowly built relationships with a selection of key organisations outside the library/information professional world.



Evidence: We gather new input through LILAC, JIL, and the IL blog. Many of our members and supporters are active researchers in this field, and we are able to provide a platform to promote and share their ideas. We have previously been able to provide bursaries for research, subject to budget availability.



Sharing: we have vehicles to share good practice and research developments in IL via LILAC, JIL, and less formal methods of communication such as the IL blog.



Education: We provide training for librarians and information professionals via our events, including LILAC.

4. How do we apply this capability to our challenges

Priority 1: Bringing Information Literacy into the mainstream

This is related to building up knowledge of information literacy in the profession and the IL community, and taking this out into other sectors and the wider world. It will also include developing our influence in the political sphere, both in partnership with CILIP and with other organisations.

Activities will include:

- ◆ advocacy and outreach with a range of public, third sector and commercial bodies, educational organisations, etc.
- ◆ developing partnerships with related organisations with an interest in information, media and digital literacy
- ◆ building on the success of the Facts Matter campaign to further embed the concept of IL in everyday and political decision-making
- ◆ a joint campaign with CILIP and others, similar to the Irish Be Media Smart campaign
- ◆ continuing to promote the CILIP Definition of Information Literacy
- ◆ gathering evidence on the impact and effectiveness of IL initiatives via the IL website, LILAC, and JIL
- ◆ lobbying and advocacy work with politicians, policy makers in government and senior leaders in education.

Priority 2: Making Information Literacy inclusive and accessible to all

This priority is about developing our inclusivity as a Group, and also improving the equality, diversity and accessibility of IL initiatives more broadly.

Activities will include:

- ◆ prioritising access to our events and conferences for people from under-represented groups, especially those who identify as BAME
- ◆ assessing our committee recruitment process to ensure we have a diverse and representative committee
- ◆ continuing to publish our Diamond Open Access journal, JIL
- ◆ developing and promoting open approaches to IL and education more generally
- ◆ ensuring all our own resources are CC-licenced and accessible.

Priority 3: Building capacity

This relates to our capacity and structure as a group, and our ability to recruit and retain both members and volunteers.

Activities will include:

- ◆ maintaining financial stability for the Group
- ◆ agreeing a plan for recruiting and retaining non-CILIP members and volunteers and, more broadly, individuals from beyond the library and information professions
- ◆ establishing a membership offer for non-librarian IL practitioners

- ◆ planning a restructure of the ILG committee/s and their governance in 2021
- ◆ redefining our relationship with CILIP, to enable us to have more autonomy and to work with CILIP in a mutually beneficial way.

Priority 4: Supporting our Members

This priority relates to the capacity of our members to support IL in their own lives and workplaces.

Activities will include:

- ◆ continuing to develop and promote CPD and training opportunities, including the LILAC conference, and online/in-person events when possible/appropriate
- ◆ developing our online training offer to support members with teaching and learning remotely
- ◆ collecting and sharing case studies and best practice from a range of sectors, on the IL website and through publication in JIL
- ◆ developing our communication with members and support for non-CILIP members.

Acknowledgement:

graphics on page 4, CC BY – Gregor Cresnar, from the Noun Project,

<https://thenounproject.com/grega.cresnar/collections/>