

Information Literacy Community of Practice for Scotland Meeting

[The Right Information: information skills for the 21st century](#)

8th February 2022, 2-4pm via Zoom

1. Welcome, apologies and introductions

In attendance: Margaret Gair, Jacqueline Geekie, Paul Gray, Morag Higgison, Cleo Jones, Kristi Long, Dina Martzoukou, Kirsten McCormick, David McMenemy, Kirsten MacQuarrie, Sean McNamara, Sorina Mihai, Anne Noble, Claire Roberts, Lauren Smith and Annette Thain.

Apologies: Helen Beardsley, David Brazier, Mary Garner, Bill Johnston, Ian McCracken, Joy McLean and Hilary Weir.

2. Previous Minutes and Matters arising

The previous meeting's minutes were approved with no issues raised.

In matters arising, it was noted that the last meeting had included a video shared with Community of Practice by Stuart McDonald MP, author of the 2021 ['Disinformation in Scottish Public Life'](#) report. Sean confirmed that a follow-up letter has been drafted by CILIPS in support of a cross-party group and national strategy to tackle mis- and disinformation in Scotland.

Sean also noted that on behalf of the CoP, CILIPS has congratulated Amina Shah on her appointment as National Librarian and CEO of the National Library of Scotland.

3. Survey and Research on Digital Library Usage – Dr David McMenemy

David shared some key findings and reflections on AHRC-funded research that he has been undertaking with Professor Ian Ruthven and Dr Elaine Robertson from the University of Strathclyde. The project's title is ['Downloading a new normal – Privacy, exclusion, and information behaviour in public library digital services use during COVID'](#) and points of particular relevance to the CoP include:

- The research has investigated the impact of lockdowns on public libraries with an emphasis on digital services (ebooks, privacy, digital equity, equity of access). 208 FOI queries were submitted to public libraries, along with focus groups, a digital survey and a staff survey.
- The findings indicate a dramatic drop in physical loans as COVID hit, with 10,000,000s of books across the UK no longer in readers' hands
- During the same period, most libraries witnessed a rise in e-lending of between 100-200%. This generated many press 'success stories' but is potentially problematic for long-term advocacy about the vital importance of physical library spaces. It is also crucial to note that the significant e-lending

increase had come from a very low starting figure with some people at least having been pre-existing borrowers.

- The project's YouGov survey revealed that in a weighted sample of 2000 people, the majority of whom were non-library users, 57% stated that e-lending is not an adequate replacement for a physical library. This strong evidence suggests that, despite what some local authorities have argued or implied, the public do not want libraries replaced with e-lending.
- The focus group data reinforced this point about physical library spaces being crucial. There were some very moving and powerful open responses from research participants about the severe, disenfranchising impact that the lack of physical library spaces has had on their lives.
- David noted that there is a real danger of library services inadvertently talking themselves into difficulty advocacy wise, promoting the ostensible success stories of e-lending in ways that inadvertently suggest this could serve as a substitute for physical libraries. The research findings demonstrate that such replacement is not at all what the public want and they would not view it as adequate.
- Amongst library staff, the research also revealed significant variations in perceptions about 'opening up' post-lockdowns: more data on this theme will be available soon.
- Sean thanked David on behalf of the CoP and noted CILIPS's experience of some local authorities seeking to use increased e-lending levels as a justification for physical service reductions. In contrast, successful community-led reopening campaigns in Glasgow have shown that, as the research suggests, the public very much want their physical library spaces to return.
- Other CoP members echoed this experience in their own services, noting that e-lending still constituted a very small percentage of items borrowed (especially when newspapers and magazines are factored into the e-lending total) and even an eye-catching percentage rise like 650% can still be a low real number if the starting point itself was low. Ebooks are not the library service, only part of the library service.

4. Maddie is Online update – Dr Konstantina (Dina) Martzoukou

- Dina shared an update about [Maddie is Online](#): a project that has created three series so far of accessible, animated resources for teachers, librarians and parents to help young people (aged 9-12) gain the digital citizenship skills they need.
- Themes covered so far include online bullying, searching for information, managing data safely, copyright and ownership, privacy and security.
- A key focus of the project is on opening up dialogue with children: data was collected from six schools, engaging with 250+ young people, and children themselves were involved in verbalizing the data for the animations.
- A new project collaboration will involve several EU partners – currently 8 partners from 6 countries – with a focus on the need to promote digital literacy in primary schools as a key pillar of education amongst a democratic citizenship. The launch is planned for March or early April.

- This will involve the translation of Maddie is Online resources and the integration of the work into an open access format where other examples of good practice can be collected.
- Maddie is Online has received support from the RGU Innovation Accelerator fund, now that its original SLIC funding has come to an end.
- Other collaborations include one with Silicon Croft, supporting the development of digital skills on Shetland.

Members of the CoP congratulated Dina on securing ongoing funding for the project and offered to help publicize/disseminate its resources across their various networks.

5. SQA units – feedback request

- Hilary Weir from SQA sent her apologies but welcomed any feedback from the CoP on the proposed new units.
- It was suggested that the units are currently very large and potentially overwhelming for learners – could smaller chunks be more user-friendly and easier to fit in an existing curriculum?
- It was also noted that although the unit title is ‘Information Literacy’, the first paragraph refers to uses of digital information. It would be helpful to make clear if the unit is addressing exclusively digital information or not.
- Overall, the CoP felt that the units were a step in the right direction and it was good to see investment in Information Literacy as a topic.
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6. Update from Information Literacy Group – Jacqueline Geekie

- 17th January 2022 was the inaugural [MILA \(Media and Information Literacy Alliance\)](#) board meeting with attendees including CILIP CEO Nick Poole and representatives from Wikimedia, NHS, the HE sector, the association for citizenship teaching and Libraries Connected. Dr Jane Secker will serve as MILA Chair.
- MILA’s initial priorities will be:
 - Drafting a clear definition of information and media literacy that can be used in outreach and advocacy
 - Mapping out relevant initiatives by stakeholders, especially those relating to advocacy, capacity building and research
 - Sharing the [Media and Information Literacy Framework](#)
- At the last CoP meeting, it was noted that Libraries Connected were going out to tender for two learning modules for public library staff. A digital literacy module is now being created, including a large list of resources at the end and signposting to further training.
- There has been a digital learning platform meeting between Libraries Connected and SLIC (the Scottish Library & Information Council) but DCMS funding is only available for work in England.
- LILAC Conference is taking place in person from 11-13th April 2022 in Manchester. [Booking now open](#) (early bird rate until 11th February)!
- The CoP thanked Jacqueline for her update. A question was asked about whether MILA is separate from CILIP and the ILG: Jacqueline confirmed that

although CILIP and ILG were key players and been instrumental in the Alliance's set up, MILA is separate from both.

7. Update on Information Literacy event

- Sean shared an update on the Information Literacy event that is planned for 8th September: Building an Information Literate and Resilient Scotland. This will be a free online event, facilitated by CILIPS but organised and led by the CoP.
- Several speakers are already confirmed including Sheila Webber from the University of Sheffield, school librarian Gillian Gillespie, Lauren Pluss from Young Scot, David Brazier of Napier University and Dr Ewan McAndrew on the Women in Red project.
- The event will be organised around several thematic panels including Young People and IL, Climate Literacy, Health & Wellbeing, Diversity and IL, and Digital Inclusion.
- Sean thanked Anne Noble and Cleo Jones for being part of the event working group alongside himself and Kirsten MacQuarrie from CILIPS.

8. Individual updates (optional)

- Annette Thain highlighted the Collective Force for Health and Wellbeing Action Plan refresh, which will feature in a session at the CILIPS Annual Conference but might suit the September IL event too.
- Jacqueline also suggested that MILA could be part of the September event.

9. Working groups

- Sean noted that from the list of potential working groups shared prior to the meeting, 3 or 4 people had been keen to be part of a Young People's Information Literacy group, with Media and Disinformation being another subject of interest. However, the other topics were less well subscribed, and it was decided that it would be more efficient to feature the themes in the general meeting agenda, rather than breaking off into separate working groups.

10. Any other Business

- Sean noted that today was Morag Higginson's last meeting with the CoP as she will be retiring on 23rd March. The whole Community of Practice thanked Morag for her outstanding contribution and vital work.

11. Date of Next Meeting

September 2022, after the 8th September Information Literacy event