
Media and Information Literacy Community of Practice for Scotland (MILCoP)

Minutes of open meeting, on Zoom, on Thursday 27 March 2025 at 2pm

Rather than a formal minute, this document précisés the presentations. Please see the relevant sections of the [video of the meeting](#) for full details.

1 Welcome, apologies and introductions

This was an open meeting, so attendance and apologies were not recorded.

2 Janice Blair and Ashley McLaren, Information Management Team, Public Health Directorate: *Success report: training public library staff on health information provision*

See video (1:50 to 29:40) and [slides](#) for full detail.

- Janice is information and publications specialist for outreach at IMT/PHD. Ashley works in the Realistic Medicine team of NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde's corporate planning.
- Their project was a training programme to equip public library staff with the skills to find and ensure quality-assured health information using health literacy techniques, while aligning with the principles of realistic medicine. It was based on realistic medicine's first two principles: shared decision-making and personalised approaches to care.
- The project focused on two objectives from [A collective force for health and wellbeing](#):
 - establishing public libraries as physical and digital hubs for trusted health and wellbeing information and digital tools.
 - strengthening the skills and confidence of library staff in supporting health literacy, underpinned by digital and information literacy.
- It used [The Health Literacy Place's health literacy definition](#) to engage with librarians, using real-life stories and statistics from the [Patient Information Forum](#) to demonstrate why good health literacy is needed, and to show the differences they could make. This tackled librarians initially lacking confidence and knowledge to help people by signposting them to information. However, the librarians very much enjoyed the training.
- The training programme covered
 - health literacy, quality-assured health information, digital inclusion
 - realistic medicine, being a partner in my care, updated digital inclusion information
 - libraries as safe spaces.
- It resulted in noticeable increases in librarians' confidence and knowledge, by enhancing their ability to navigate and share quality-assured health information. Feedback from librarians has been very positive, shown (in part) by requests for refresher courses and by public appreciation of the health information and support they received from librarians.
- The team aims to implement regular refresher training, expand the programme to more libraries, and to continue to improve the training programme. It aims to contribute to the next version of [Forward: Scotland's public library strategy](#).
- Wider work by the realistic medicine team includes
 - providing training to community librarians in NHS GGC's very different areas
 - mapping post-pandemic [digital support availability](#)
 - working towards further roll-out via [NHS Near Me](#) in libraries as safe spaces (further detail in the video from 24:50 to 27:17)
 - working with charity partners
 - streamlining connections to services via [NHS GGC's service directory](#).
- The team's vision is that (1) librarians are health literacy trained, (2) they are familiar with health information resources, (3) libraries are stocked with core resources, (4) they use the 'health and wellbeing/digital champion' model, (5) creation of private spaces for 3rd sector partners based on local needs, (6) creation of private secure spaces for [Near Me](#).
- Funding matters are discussed in the video (27:40 to 29:30).

3 **Kirsty Ross, University of St Andrews: *Universities and the ethical nation***

See video (30:15 to 52:40) and [slides](#) for full detail.

- Kirsty is a public engagement professional, currently working in industrial liaison for the School of Computer Science of the University of St Andrews. She is a co-founder of the [IDEA network](#).
- IDEA's mission is to make knowledge production **I**nclusive, **D**iverse, **E**quitable and **A**ccessible, via high-impact open knowledge projects that bring researchers closer to communities.
- The team is [Kirsty Ross](#), [Abd Alsattar Ardatt](#) (also St Andrews) and [Sara Thomas](#) (Wikimedia UK). Their aims with IDEA are
 - engaging under-represented groups and knowledge
 - building digital, data and information literacy
 - increasing capacity for open knowledge, including various Wikimedia projects.
- Work at St Andrews includes various collaborations in continuous learning, research, teaching and knowledge exchange.
 - Continuous learning included photographing listed buildings in St Andrews to enable illustration Wikipedia articles. It included use of the [WikiShootme tool](#).
 - Teaching included repurposing existing Wikidata knowledge and working with soil samples from local schools to search for DNA and so find possible new antibiotics.
 - Knowledge exchange included [research into the role of universities in the ethical digital nation](#). This research asks how marginalised communities can be empowered with digital skills to actively contribute to open knowledge platforms, breaking the cycle of digital exclusion and AI bias while fostering more ethical and representative AI systems. For example, much Wikimedia information is from white, time-rich males.
- Hence the team is currently drafting an [EPSRC](#) funding bid to bring together under-represented communities to find what would help them, using [participatory design](#). Libraries might be venues for co-design workshops, skills academies etc.
 - This work would use community interest groups, including non-English speakers.
 - People are welcome to contact Kirsty via ideanetwork@standrews.ac.uk.
- Next steps include writing a white paper about the ethical digital nation, collaboration on the funding bid, and knowledge exchange work. Partners are welcome.
- Discussion included consideration of open access and public libraries (for example using open-access versions of publications as references in Wikipedia articles), and the risk of AI contaminating human knowledge (in part by training AI on its own outputs).

4 **Ali Brian, The Ferret: *The Ferret Fact Service***

See video (53:20 to 1:15:50) for full detail.

- Ali is a fact-checker at the non-partisan [Ferret Fact Service](#), launched in spring 2017 in response to (among other things) the 'aftermath' of the Scottish independence referendum, Brexit and the 2016 US presidential election.
 - FFS is part of [The Ferret](#), which focuses on public-interest investigative journalism.
 - FFS is accredited by the [International Fact-Checking Network](#). FFS and *The Ferret* are very keen on [transparency in the media](#).
- The call for media transparency comes from the five most-[trusted professions in 2024](#) being nurses, engineers, doctors, professors and teachers and the five least-trusted professions being landlords, journalists, advertising executives, government ministers and politicians in general.
 - Librarians previously were in the top five in previous years: they may have been included with teachers in the 2024 data.
- Impacts of this include people not trusting 'the media', traditional media having lost its monopoly over news, people feeling unrepresented by mainstream media. Hence there are many alternative news sources.

- Problems include mis and disinformation being everywhere, spread via all social media platforms, and exposing people to false information from very young ages. There is mixed evidence on 'digital natives' being able to spot misinformation. For example, two-thirds of US school students in a 2018-19 study could not tell the difference between news articles and advertisements on a news page.
- Young people get their news online, mostly social media. Their top 5 news-sources are Instagram, Facebook, BBC One, Twitter and TikTok. 16% get news from print newspapers. TikTok is the main news source for 12-15 year olds.
 - Yet young people have low trust in social platforms, but more trust in traditional platforms, despite not using them.
- Older people tend to get news from traditional media, although also using social media. So different age-groups may be unaware of other platforms' misinformation challenges.
- Hence FFS checks claims by politicians and public figures for accuracy, spots false news stories, and debunks viral content on social media (currently a major part of its work). It provides training session across Scotland to help people develop critical thinking skills about information that is said to be true.
- There has been a shift in how global information impacts politics. Hence FFS has worked on the culture war, the impact of toxic masculinity, the far-right, COVID denialism and climate denialism (all of which are linked to some degree). Local misinformation flashpoints include traffic and 15-minute city measures and social distancing.
- Examples of culture wars in Scotland include reactions to [Humza Yousaf's 'white speech'](#), to hate-speech laws, to self-ID, to abortion buffer-zones and to other personal freedoms. These have been added to misinformation issues outwith Scotland.
- In reaction, FFS is working in the information literacy space. It has held pilot sessions with Glasgow public and school librarians, and surveyed the CILIPS membership about what they are doing to tackle misinformation issues. FFS plans to expand its training offer, and work more with librarians and information literacy experts, working with CILIPS and Young Scot in schools and community settings. FFS aims to plug gaps in resource and time. FFS aims for digital citizenship rather than simple digital literacy.
- Discussion covered trust and anti-vax narratives on social media, a [Wikimedia report on its democracy work](#), library subscriptions to *The Ferret*, use of online versions of traditional newspapers (which can cause loss of context and de-linking from the original sources if screenshots of these sources are shared on social media).

5 Stéphane Goldstein: Media and Information Literacy Alliance (MILA) update

See video (1:16:15 to 1:20:35) for full detail.

- [MILA](#)'s purpose is to be a forum for individuals and organisations (UK and elsewhere) that are interested in media literacy, information and associated literacies. It was set up as a charity in late 2023.
- MILA aims to be a meeting-place for librarianship, academia, education, policy and other organisations. It wishes to foster communities of practice, collaborative initiatives, research projects etc but has no fixed agenda: it's guided from the bottom up.
- MILA recently held a [stakeholder event](#) to start creative conversations, bringing together organisations that might not normally engage. It is considering a similar Scottish event.

6 Stéphane Goldstein: Information Literacy Group (ILG) update

See video (1:21:00 to 1:22:04) for full detail.

- [ILG's](#) current main activity is organising the [LILAC conference](#) (14 to 16 April). LILAC organisers would like more presentations and participants from beyond higher education.

7 Bruce Ryan, Edinburgh Napier: *Tackling misinformation and disinformation for Scottish school librarians*

See video (1:22:30 to 1:36:30) and [slides](#) for full detail.

- [Bruce](#) has been [funded by CILIPS to undertake this project](#).
- The project aims to understand how Scottish school librarians are helping pupils to be better able to tackle mis- and disinformation issues, and what more could be done. The research questions are:
 - How involved are school librarians in enabling pupils' handling of mis/disinformation?
 - What would they like to do to help pupils better prepare to handle mis/disinformation?
 - What training/support do they have and wish for?
 - How can they collaborate with teachers?
 - How can this be used to advocate for school librarians/libraries?
- In his literature review work, Bruce has found no guidance or policies for Scottish school librarians on mis- and disinformation from local authorities or Education Scotland. He would be very grateful for any such materials.
- He will soon undertake focus groups and interviews with school librarians. He would be very grateful for more participants. He will then draw out draft findings and potential ways forward from these, then reality-check them with leaders of school library services.
 - So he is also seeking leaders to participate in the second step.
- He will present on the whole project at the [CILIPS annual conference](#) in early June 2025.
- Findings so far:
 - 20 responses to survey, all from secondary school librarians from 11 local authorities. So responses from primary school librarians would be very welcome. The respondents have on average 13 years' service as school librarians. Two are not qualified as librarians; the others have at a first degree or charterhip.
 - 6 respondents' libraries have less than 1 full-time equivalent, only 2 have more than 1 FTE.
 - Requests for help with mis- and disinformation issue are mostly from students and staff. Barriers to providing further help include lacks of time, training and training opportunities, budget, interest from others.
 - Respondents call for more training and collaboration with teachers.
 - Respondents have so far suggested resources and schemes such as the [National Literacy Trust](#), the [School Library Association](#), CILIPS, PLUS (plan, locate, use, self-evaluate), CAR (current, accurate, relevant) .
 - Some local authorities' school librarians are being under-resourced, deprofessionalised or even removed, in favour of giving pupils iPads with access to 'everything they might need' but no librarians to help them work with information!
- An attendee mentioned a [new tool to combat online hate and disinformation](#). This may be mostly aimed at teachers, so may be part of the materials for a future project. Another attendee mentioned [Banned Together](#), which is about a struggle against book-banning.

8 Any other business

- none

9 Next meeting date

- Thursday 23 October 2025, 2pm to 4pm (to be confirmed)