



OVERDUE | INFORMATION LITERACY

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In the mid-1900s, humanity entered a stage in history known as the Information Age, a period marked by the rapid expansion of information technology and, eventually, the internet. It is also called the Digital Age because information fundamentally changed. Where information was once limited to select groups, it is now accessible to nearly everyone. But access to information does not automatically create informed people. Instead, we now live in a world where individuals, organizations, platforms, and algorithms all compete to share information and their interpretation of it. The sources people trust increasingly shapes how they understand health, education, institutions, communities, and one another.

This is where librarians step in. Because libraries serve as community hubs, librarians become familiar with both the questions patrons ask and the resources best suited to answering them. Their role is not simply to locate information, but to guide people through information overload, competing interpretations, and source evaluation using the most reliable resources available. In other words, librarians no longer simply preserve information. They help people critically engage with information. As information becomes faster, fragmented, and harder to evaluate, that role has only grown more essential.

When I attended university, the World Wide Web was still in its infancy, and even within my school library there were already countless online sources to choose from. Accessing information was never the difficult part. The challenge was determining which sources were trustworthy and accurate. At the time, I did not fully appreciate the number of

available choices or the complexity involved in evaluating them. But librarians consistently helped me understand the nature of online and published sources. They always knew which publication, database, or journal held the answers I needed. Looking back, I realize they were not simply helping me locate information. They were teaching me how to evaluate it.

Librarians do not simply know where information exists. They continuously evaluate, organize, contextualize, and make information accessible so communities can better understand, engage with, and succeed in the world around them. In an age where everyone competes for your attention, information literacy has become more than an academic skill. It is now a civic and personal necessity. The information people consume increasingly shapes how they understand institutions, communities, and each other. Librarians help people separate insight from noise, evidence from opinion, and trustworthy information from misinformation. More importantly, they help communities think critically about the information they share and consume.

This has been OVERDUE. Come back next week to keep your account in good standing.

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