
SCONUL Working Group on Information Literacy – the direction of travel for the working group for a few years

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MOVING ON ...

One of the great products of the SCONUL Working Group on Information Literacy (SWGIL) is the SCONUL seven pillars, or headline skills, of information literacy – used by many universities and colleges in the UK since the first iteration eight years ago. The most recent edition is on the SCONUL website now – and yes, we have kept it to seven. The working group's turnover last year was around 50/50. It took a while to get back on track. What is interesting about this transition process is that we had a huge response for new members – so we recruited some additional people to increase our ability to pursue some activities and will ask our colleagues to work on projects with members of the working group. So, from this lively basis of landmarks and enthusiasm, what can I tell you about our developing direction and what are we doing to support SCONUL members?

SUPPORTING PRACTICE

The working group thought it was time to take a look at how the 'seven pillars' model influences policy and practice in the UK. SCONUL members might have responded to Cathryn Gallacher's brief e-mail survey on this, seeking to find out how widely the seven pillars model is used. The

second phase of the study will look for case studies which illustrate the model in action, and determine whether there are further ways which the SWGIL can develop or supplement the model to help those who are developing strategies, embedding skills in programmes and generally wanting evidence of good practice. This will of course appear on the website and in other forms that members can use within their institutions. This work will complement a couple of other pieces of research and we will review all of this to develop our activities.

PARTNERSHIPS IN SUPPORT

What is emerging is that we cannot be complacent – we have to keep developing our ability to interact with teaching, learning and research agendas in our institutions. The SWGIL feel we have to look more closely at defining our role with organisations supporting institutions. Moira Bent of SWGIL is a Higher Education Academy national teaching fellow. Through this link we have started working with the HEA. The HEA reported above-average interest in membership amongst librarians and we have also had a fair distribution of the national teaching fellows. We hope to seek opinion amongst librarians on the HEA and suggest how it can support librarians more through the subject centres, with perhaps SCONUL and the HEA also setting up key contacts in the different subject areas and exploring information literacy for university staff.

INTERNATIONAL EXEMPLARS

We are also looking at how we can improve international links. When you compare most models of information literacy there is a high level of consensus. We think there is scope for further analysis, to benchmark higher education institutions (HEI) with developments elsewhere. The main approach to this is via sister organisations in Ireland, the US, Canada, Europe and Australasia. We are seeking opportunities to present our practice at conferences and combine this with meetings on cooperative work, for example a planned joint conference with the Irish Consortium of National and University Libraries (CONUL) and the SWGIL, on 'Information literacy and the researchers' needs', in Dublin in January 2008. This will help us develop an agenda to support SCONUL members in engaging with this agenda with their research committees and researchers.

WEB 2.0

Many of us are already grappling with Web 2.0 and the impact this will inevitably have on our information-literacy offerings. A new book edited by Peter Godwin and Jo Parker (with a chapter from Sheila Webber – also on the SWGIL) is due to be published by Facet in spring 2008. It will offer a practically based overview of emerging tools and technologies, a series of case studies from around the world to help inform our practice and reflections on the implications of Web 2.0 on the training of information-literacy professionals.

RECOGNITION FOR INFORMATION-LITERACY DEVELOPMENT – A NEW SCONUL AWARD

Finally, we intend to steal the clothes of the building group and have an award. We are considering how to structure this, but it will reward an HEI that has had a significant impact on the development of information literacy for staff, students or researchers. The first award is likely to be presented in 2009 at the SCONUL summer conference. This should stimulate a lot more discussion on institutional responses to information literacy, giving recognition to success and helping others develop their ability to work at an institutional level.

CONTACT US

Please feel free to contact us with any ideas or a wishlist for the group to work on.