



Provided by the author(s) and University College Dublin Library in accordance with publisher policies., Please cite the published version when available.

Title	Information Literacy Journal Club
Authors(s)	Dalton, Michelle; Tumelty, Niamh
Publication date	2014-04
Publication information	ALISS Quarterly, 9 (3): 2-4
Publisher	Association of Librarians and Information Professionals in the Social Sciences
Link to online version	http://alissnet.org.uk/aliss-quarterly/aliss-quarterly-past-issues/
Item record/more information	http://hdl.handle.net/10197/7055

Downloaded 2019-03-21T08:16:45Z

The UCD community has made this article openly available. Please share how this access benefits you. Your story matters! (@ucd_oa)



Some rights reserved. For more information, please see the item record link above.



Information Literacy Journal Club

Michelle Dalton (College Liaison Librarian, University College Dublin, Ireland, michelle.dalton@ucd.ie) & Niamh Tumelty (Departmental Librarian (Engineering), University of Cambridge, UK, nt311@cam.ac.uk)

Journal clubs as a tool for professional development

Journal clubs have been used as a teaching and learning tool in medicine and health sciences for many years. More recently, as the concept of evidence-based practice has been transferred to library and information studies (Booth, 2000), journal clubs have also been adopted in libraries in “an attempt to keep up with developments in the field, share knowledge, and apply it to practice where possible” (Young & Vilelle, 2011, p. 130). Whilst the tradition of utilising journal clubs for professional development purposes is relatively well-established, the literature suggests that “there is little information on the most effective way of conducting a journal club to gain the most educational benefit from it” (Deenadayalan, 2008, p. 905).

Journal clubs most often take place as face-to-face meetings, typically during a lunchtime or coffee break, however with the emergence of social media and networking tools, new possibilities for interaction have opened up. Unlike some other professional development activities, journal clubs are often perceived as “a safe place for open discussion” – where participants feel comfortable sharing views that they might not express in a departmental meeting or in the context of the library hierarchy” (Young & Vilelle, 2011, p.134). This kind of informal information exchange and knowledge sharing is often particularly congruent with the online world, where blogging can represent “conversational scholarship” (Gregg, 2006, p. 147) and the “3Cs of Twitter” facilitate “community, communication and casual (informal) learning” (Reed, 2013, p. 2).

The Information Literacy Journal Club

The Information Literacy Journal Club (<http://infolitjournalclub.blogspot.co.uk/>) is an online discussion group that focuses on information literacy and other aspects of user education. The journal club was originally set up on the Blogger platform in December 2012 by Niamh Tumelty (University of Cambridge) and Sheila Webber (University of Sheffield), and since then the community involved has grown to include a range of professionals interested in the area.

The blog follows the basic principles of a traditional face to face journal club, translating elements as necessary to complement and leverage the advantages afforded by the digital environment. Approximately once a month an article or paper is selected by a participant for discussion by the community. This member then writes an accompanying blog post summarising and reflecting on the key issues, and providing some initial questions for discussion. The discussion or 'chat' then takes place from 8-9pm in real-time on a specified date through the form of blog comments posted by other participants. However, those unable to attend during the meeting can still read and contribute to the discussion afterwards, as posts and comments remain accessible on the blog. Whilst the discussion primarily takes place via the blog, the #ILRead hashtag on Twitter provides an additional channel for connecting and sharing ideas. In this way, the online format of the journal club offers more flexibility for participants than traditional face to face meetings, where travel, scheduling and time commitments can often be a significant barrier to attendance (Young & Vilelle, 2011, p. 133).

A reader's perspective

Perhaps one of the unique strengths of the Information Literacy Journal Club lies in its open and collaborative approach. Anyone interested in the area of information literacy can participate by selecting an article for discussion, and this format has generated a rich and varied range of topics that span sectoral, disciplinary and geographic boundaries including:

- SCONUL Seven Pillars of Information Literacy
- The value of reflective writing for information literacy development
- A New Curriculum for Information Literacy
- TeachMeets: Librarians, learning from each other
- A Healthcare Lens for the SCONUL Seven Pillars of Information Literacy Model
- The importance of information literacy in the Open landscape
- UNESCO's Media and Information Literacy resolution
- Research agendas for information literacy

One of the most popular discussions to date has been that of Barbara Fister's keynote paper at LOEX 2013, *Decode academy*, which outlined a number of "outrageous claims" for university libraries. 125 comments were posted during the discussion, including many from the author herself proving insight, context and a new perspective for readers. Those working as solo librarians or in smaller libraries may often find they have limited opportunities for this kind of discussion with colleagues. By transferring the conversation to an intuitive online platform such as a blog, it makes it accessible to a much wider audience and provides a place for like-minded people to connect and share ideas, and potentially to identify collaborators or co-authors for future research projects. Unlike other online resources for professional development such as MOOCs which often require significant time commitments, the fluid and flexible format allows participants to drop in and out of the Journal Club depending on their availability, research and professional interests.

An organiser's perspective

An evidence-based approach to librarianship is important to me, so when I completed my masters dissertation (Tumelty, 2012) I sought a way to continue to keep up to date with developments of research into information literacy. One journal article a month is an achievable goal, and the knowledge that a group of other information professionals are reading the same article and preparing to discuss it with you provides a great source of motivation.

The most enjoyable and valuable discussions so far from my point of view have been the ones where the author has joined the discussion, prompting me to pay even more attention to the arguments contained in their articles and providing an opportunity to seek clarification or extension of ideas in an informal and welcoming environment. All authors I have approached so far have welcomed this opportunity to discuss their work, raise its profile and develop ideas for future research.

An author's perspective

A further interesting feature of the journal club is the involvement and participation of many of the authors of the papers that are selected for discussion. When one of my own papers was selected for discussion in August (Dalton, 2013), I found it an incredibly valuable experience as an author and researcher. Once the peer-review process is completed, scholarly publishing often becomes a one-way channel of communication. However, opening up the discussion in a forum such as the Information Literacy Journal Club, extends the conversation, provides a platform for interaction and allows the author to gain feedback, input and ideas from those who have read their work.

For those who would like to move towards a more evidence-based approach to their everyday practice and operations, journal clubs often represent a valuable “step in the right direction” (Pearce-Smith, 2006, p. 37). The format provides an informal introduction to the research literature in an accessible and interactive way, helping to foster communities and networks of like-minded people.

If you are interesting in participating in the next Information Literacy Journal Club, watch out for our next blog post at <http://infolitjournalclub.blogspot.co.uk/> or get in touch with us to suggest a topic for discussion.

References

- Booth, A. (2000), "Librarian, heal thyself: evidence-based librarianship, useful, practicable, desirable?", Proceedings of the 8th International Congress on Medical Librarianship, London, UK, 2-5 July, www.icml.org/tuesday/themes/booth.htm
- Dalton, M. (2013). Developing an evidence-based practice healthcare lens for the SCONUL Seven Pillars of Information Literacy model. *Journal of Information Literacy*, 7(1).
- Deenadayalan, Y., Grimmer-Somers, K., Prior, M., & Kumar, S. (2008). How to run an effective journal club: a systematic review. *Journal of evaluation in clinical practice*, 14(5), 898-911.
- Fister, B. (2013) *Decode academy*. Paper presented at LOEX, 3 May 2013. <http://homepages.gac.edu/~fister/loex13.pdf>
- Gregg, M. (2006) Feeling ordinary: blogging as conversational scholarship. *Continuum*, 20(2), 147-160.
- Pearce-Smith, N. (2006). A journal club is an effective tool for assisting librarians in the practice of evidence-based librarianship: a case study. *Health Information & Libraries Journal*, 23(1), 32-40.
- Reed, P. (2013). Hashtags and retweets: using Twitter to aid Community, Communication and Casual (informal) learning. *Research In Learning Technology*, 21. doi:10.3402/rlt.v21i0.19692
- Tumelty, N. (2012). The Seven Pillars of Information Literacy at the transition to university. Unpublished Masters thesis, Aberystwyth University. Young, P., & Vilelle, L. (2011). The Prevalence and Practices of Academic Library Journal Clubs. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 37(2), 130-136.