

## Information Literacy and Social Media: Empowered Student Engagement with the ACRL Framework, by Michele Santamaria and A. Nicole Pfnnenstiel

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The Association of College and Research Libraries' (ACRL) *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* was introduced on February 2, 2015 and adopted in January 2016. It is made up of six key frames, and these are Authority Is Constructed and Contextual, Information Creation as a Process, Information Has Value, Research as Inquiry, Scholarship as Conversation, and Searching as Strategic Exploration (Association of College and Research Libraries 2015). It draws upon the concept of metaliteracy and situates students as both consumers and creators of information.

In an increasingly digitized world, new risks and challenges threaten traditional information systems. *Information Literacy and Social Media: Empowered Student Engagement with the ACRL Framework* outlines a way of mapping the ACRL's framework for information literacy onto social media platforms. The authors provide eight lesson plans that teach students key information literacy skills and provide tools to better discern misinformation in daily life. They contend that

... evaluating information—whether COVID-19 safety recommendations or identifying deep fakes—requires teaching our students adaptable processes and not static heuristics . . . Our conventional information literacy teaching and learning tools are simply not up to the task . . . This book situates itself in the life-long, real-world challenges and transferable applications of what it means . . . to become information literate in college by engaging rather than avoiding social media platforms. (v)

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Through this methodology, the authors map the ACRL's concepts onto social media platforms. In doing so, they hope to develop students' media literacy skills and arm them with tools to better navigate the modern information landscape. This book aims to present a new, updated approach to information literacy instruction, harnessing social media to empower students in their own learning process for deeper and more impactful learning.

The authors, Michele Santamaria and A. Nicole Pfannenstiel, are knowledgeable in a variety of areas, and have real-world experience with information literacy instruction. Santamaria is the learning design librarian and Pfannenstiel is an associate professor of English at Millersville University. Both authors regularly interact with students and use these experiences to directly inform their work.

They discuss how social media users are exposed to varied sources—every source offering different perspectives and goals which users must evaluate for credibility. At the same time, users themselves co-create this content by engaging with and sharing it. Users constantly engage with content, commenting, sharing it and feeding the algorithms, thereby contributing to the dispersal, authority, and meaning of said content. This process is ongoing. The authors do acknowledge the challenges and risks involved in this co-creative environment, as social media algorithms often perpetuate the marginalisation of certain groups. Algorithms are often inherently racist, sexist, and ableist, amplifying the biases of its users. This bias affects the newsfeeds and information streams of users, who may not be aware of these biases when utilizing a platform.

To combat these issues, the authors advocate that instructors offer guidance in these areas. That is, instruct on digital literacy—discuss digital ethics, surrounding issues like privacy, copyright, and fact-checking before disseminating any information found on social media. The authors maintain that “...situating students as creators and researchers of information wherever they interact with information” (vii) will deepen and better inform the learning process, by making learners active participants within it. Social Media can be used to point out real-life examples of misinformation, as well as other concerns like copyright infringement and the broader discussion of the value of information. The authors' lesson plans draw directly from the ACRL's framework and emphasize the role and responsibility that students have in creating new knowledge, in changing dynamics of world information, and in using information and scholarship ethically. This is why utilizing social media in information literacy instruction can be so useful, as the authors highlight.

The ideas outlined here are timely. With social media's popularity, rampant mis- and disinformation, and bias, there is an urgent need for education in these areas.

The book outlines an interactive learning strategy that is fitting for the modern classroom, with real-world, practical applications and the possibility for a deeper, more impactful understanding. For example, in one lesson template, students explore different hashtags on platforms like X, Instagram, TikTok, or Mastodon. Students note how different conversations are related to these keywords, the unique context of the platform, and the authority given to comments in each. Through interacting with these conversations, and classroom discussion, students consider how authority is contextual and constructed, and how conversations can coexist under a keyword in this way on social media. Through eight lesson plans, the authors offer examples of how social media can be used to teach information literacy in this way. The authors are responding to a modern and urgent need with a methodology that is current and well thought-out. This is relevant to the field and explores a current gap in the scholarly research into how social media can be harnessed for information literacy instruction.

One issue with implementing this instruction is the digital divide, and the assumption that all learners have access to necessary devices and internet connection to participate. As well, the authors note that students themselves arrive in the classroom with preconceived notions of social media platforms. They don't necessarily view social media platforms as "professional" places, and these platforms have traditionally been criticised and dismissed by older generations. The authors feel that students' resistance to use social media as a learning tool in this way is indeed "...the most significant variable affecting success" (11). The authors hope to combat these biases against social media by asking students questions to examine their preconceived notions about social media as a communication space. Pfannenstiel herself utilizes X as an educator, and she sees these spaces as communities for lifelong learning. The authors do point out that several work tools, from Google Meet to Slack to LinkedIn, mirror social media platforms in terms of functionality. However, the digital divide remains a significant drawback here. For the authors' methodologies to be carried out effectively, it is imperative to ensure that all learners are given an equitable ability to participate in social media-based learning. Closer attention should therefore be paid to these drawbacks in order to ensure they do not impede learning.

An additional drawback of this book is that it is highly anecdotal; there is not much data, aside from the authors' own personal success stories, to back their claims. The ideas this book presents seem well-thought out and full of potential, however, at this time, increased study into their effectiveness within the classroom would be useful to substantiate the authors' claims that social media can be used for information literacy instruction. For example, a qualitative survey of the impact of

these lesson plans on students' information literacy skill development would further support this idea.

The writers use an accessible, professional yet personable tone that flows nicely throughout. Their book is both readable and informative, without feeling jargon-heavy. This contributes to an accessible and informative reading experience.

*Information Literacy and Social Media: Empowered Student Engagement with the ACRL Framework* sets out a new, innovative methodology for information literacy instruction utilizing the ACRL framework. In an increasingly online era, the method responds to changing digital landscapes and the constant influx of information students experience today. It presents a way for modern instructors to combat modern challenges and give learners a more active role in the learning process. Provided that the challenges of the digital divide, inherent algorithmic bias, and risk of exposure to misinformation are adequately addressed and mitigated (to whatever extent they can be) by instructors, this is a promising, updated way to engage modern students in their own learning, in a real-world context in which they are familiar.

#### REFERENCE

Association of College and Research Libraries. 2015. "Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education." <https://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/ilframework>.