Information & Media Literacy: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Education and Digitalization in a Mediatized Information and Knowledge Society

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Abstract

The role of information literacy for the integration of refugees

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Due to numerous conflicts in the world today, many refugees seek asylum in Germany and need to be integrated into society. Integration activities centres around learning the language, building a social network, finding work and partaking in democratic processes. All of these activities require a level of information literacy skills that refugees cannot be assumed to hold. However, offers of assistance and support for this target group often take information literacy skills for granted, for this reason many of these offerings do not even reach the intended audience.

Although Internet familiarity is high among migrant groups, often used for communicating with family members and friends spread out in other countries, the high level of engagement with social media cannot be equated with strong information literacy skills. The way refugees use the Internet to find information regarding leisure, health job-seeking activities is not well understood. Studies targeting the information practice and seeking or digital competencies of refugees on the Internet or interactions with information systems are very rare.

In a first study with seven refugees in Germany, we were able to show that digital skills are often not sufficiently developed to obtain information about the German labour market, training opportunities and job vacancies, or to initiate a digital application process (Stiller & Trkulja, 2018). In a second and larger study we conduct in summer 2018 we examine the information literacy skills of refugees and their information behaviour in a usability lab study combined with interviews. This talk will present results of the information literacy assessment of refugees, their barriers to successful information seeking as well as first recommendations how information literacy can be conveyed to this particular group and how information systems of public authorities might need to change to adapt to this particular user group.

Short CV

Violeta Trkulja has a doctorate in Information Science from the Heinrich-Heine-Universität Düsseldorf, Germany. She worked as a researcher for the Department of Information Science at the Heinrich-Heine-Universität (2002-2008) and obtained her doctoral degree analysing the Digital Divide in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Since 2012, she has been working at the Berlin School of Library and Information Science at

Humboldt-Universität Berlin as a researcher and project manager. Together with her colleague Juliane Stiller, she received the OCLC Research Grant to examine the information-seeking behaviour of refugee migrants in Germany, while pursuing a job, a training position, or following an educational path on the Internet. Violeta's research contributes to a better understanding of digital skills and information literacy of refugee that can be used to design targeted courses and curricula that address online deficits. She is a member of "the German Network of Refugee Researchers".

Juliane Stiller is a researcher at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. She studied library science at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin and history of science and technology at Technical University in Berlin. In 2014, she obtained a doctoral degree in information science evaluating interactions in cultural heritage digital libraries. She worked in several national and European projects in relation to digital cultural heritage. Currently, she works in a project to evaluate translation algorithms for metadata for scientific literature in the domain of psychology and she studies the information seeking behaviour of refugees in Germany. Her research centres around evaluation of information systems, multilingual information retrieval, metadata quality as well as information-seeking behaviour and digital skills of refugees. She is a member of "the German Network of Refugee Researchers". Prior to her research at the university, she worked several years at Google in Dublin, Ireland, as a search quality analyst.