Digital Inclusion: Public Policy, Public Libraries, and the Individual

Kim M Thompson
Charles Sturt University
School of Information Studies
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Special Studies Program
SSP
Digital Literacy and Digital Inclusion: Information Policy and the Public Library

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Paul T Jaeger
Natalie Greene Taylor
Mega Subramaniam
John Carlo Bertot
Scarecrow Press

August 2014
digital literacy
digital inclusion
information access and use
information worlds framework
physical access

intellectual access

social access
# information worlds

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Access</th>
<th>Macro-</th>
<th>Meso-</th>
<th>Micro-</th>
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<td>Social</td>
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</table>
physical access
physical information access

- Information policy
- Information infrastructure
- Library and information agency
- Usability analysis
- User-centered design
physical information access

• Information policy and infrastructure
physical information access

- Usability analysis, user-centered design, and library evaluation
physical access

intellectual access
Asociacion de Bibliotecarios y Documentalistas de Honduras

Bienvenidos(as) a la ABIDH
intellectual information access

• Language
• Intellectual capacity/education
• Literacy
• Computer/technology literacy
• Information literacy
intellectual information access

• Information literacy/literacies
physical access

intellectual access

social access
social information access

- **Culture**
  - “We’re not an information/library culture”

- **Social value of information**

- **Formal and informal information channels**

- **Internal and external social networks**
social information access

• Library and information cultures
social information access

• Information behaviors and practices
information access and use
digital literacy
digital inclusion
<table>
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<td>Social</td>
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<tr>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Macro- (Policy)</td>
<td>Meso- (Institution)</td>
<td>Micro- (Individual)</td>
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Public and Institutional Policy

- Freedom of Information legislation
- Digital Inclusion
- Library and other information infrastructure funding
- Information-focused non-profits
Public Libraries

- International Organization for Standardization (2013)
  - Financed with public funds
  - Open to the public
  - Basic services free of charge or available for a subsidized fee
South Korea
The Netherlands
Colombia
Honduras
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<tr>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>84.10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Netherlands</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>United States</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>81.03%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>82.35 %</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td>Colombia</td>
<td>80</td>
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<td>Honduras</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>18.12%</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>17.11%</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>UN International Human Development Index rank in 2012 (UN, 2013)</td>
<td>GDP per capita 2012 in USD (World Bank, 2013b)</td>
<td>Government (Central Intelligence Agency, 2013)</td>
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<td>-------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>12 (Very high)</td>
<td>$22,590</td>
<td>republic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Netherlands</td>
<td>4 (Very high)</td>
<td>$46,054</td>
<td>constitutional monarchy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>3 (Very high)</td>
<td>$49,965</td>
<td>constitution-based federal republic; strong democratic tradition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>2 (Very high)</td>
<td>$67,036</td>
<td>federal parliamentary democracy and Commonwealth realm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>91 (High)</td>
<td>$7,752</td>
<td>republic; executive branch dominates government structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honduras</td>
<td>120 (Medium)</td>
<td>$2,264</td>
<td>democratic constitutional republic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>135 (Medium)</td>
<td>$1,605</td>
<td>constitutional democracy</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>50,004,441 (Statistics Korea, 2012)</td>
<td>Korean, English widely taught in secondary school</td>
<td>83.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Netherlands</td>
<td>16,788,119 (Statistics Netherlands, 2013)</td>
<td>Dutch (official), Frisian (official); English commonly studied</td>
<td>83%</td>
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<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>316,655,430 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013)</td>
<td>English 82.1%, Spanish 10.7%, other 7.2%</td>
<td>82%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>23,179,419 (Australia Bureau of Statistics, 2013)</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>45,745,783 (Central Intelligence Agency, 2013)</td>
<td>Spanish (official)</td>
<td>75%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Honduras</td>
<td>8,448,465 (Central Intelligence Agency, 2013)</td>
<td>Spanish (official), Amerindian dialects</td>
<td>52%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>25,199,609 (Central Intelligence Agency, 2013)</td>
<td>English (official), 9 additional government supported languages</td>
<td>51.9%</td>
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Languages on the World Wide Web in 2013

- English, 55.5%
- Spanish, 4.5%
- Russian, 6.1%
- German, 5.9%
- Japanese, 4.9%
- Portuguese, 2.3%
- Polish, 1.8%
- Italian, 1.7%
- Turkish, 1.3%
- Arabic, 0.9%
- Dutch/Flemish, 1.2%
- All other languages, 6.2%

Data from W3Techs.com, November 16, 2013
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<td>Country</td>
<td>Median age (Central Intelligence Agency, 2013)</td>
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<td>20.7</td>
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Findings

• Public libraries around the world are relied upon more than any other cultural institution to overcome the digital divide, teach digital literacy, and foster digital inclusion
Findings

- Internet and related technologies have created new responsibilities for public libraries in ensuring digital literacy and digital inclusion in communities.
Findings

• The value of the public library now lies less with the printed information that is available within the four walls of the library and more with the myriad services that they provide in an effort to connect members of the public with information that is central to their day-to-day lives.
Findings

- Internet and related technologies have also created new ways for public libraries to meet community needs (e.g., collaborative partnerships)
Practice

- The Queens Borough Public Library in New York “New Americans Project”, ESL, support for new immigrants
- Alachua County Library District, Florida, working with the local office of the state’s Department of Children and Families, the Partnership for Strong Families, and Casey Family Programs, opened up a new facility (“The Library Partnership”) housing approximately 40 non-profit organizations and local government agencies that provide social services
Practice

- Hartford Public Library in Connecticut “The American Place”, a program with the principal goals of helping an increasingly diverse group of immigrants secure citizenship and achieve language literacy.

- Pima County Public Library of Tucson, Arizona, public health nurses from the county health department stationed in the library branches.
Baltimore, Maryland based Enoch Pratt public libraries worked with the City Health Department to ensure the availability of fresh groceries to those living in food deserts by providing opportunities for patrons to order their groceries through library computers and have the food delivered the next day to the library.
Findings

- There are no other cultural institutions prepared to serve the public in the digital literacy and digital inclusion capacities that public libraries do, for a lack of sufficient public access technology and for a lack of the ability to provide education and training related to the Internet.
Policy

- Reconcile the incompatibility between funding cuts at the state and local level, as well as limited support at the national level, with the increased view at the federal level that libraries are part of the solution to large-scale technological problems.
Policy

- When demanding more of libraries to fulfill these digital literacy and digital inclusion functions, do not reduce library funding
Policy

- When demanding more of libraries to fulfill these digital literacy and digital inclusion functions, do not reduce library funding.
- Governments at all levels should consider geography, infrastructure, and history when making demands on libraries.
Policy

- Policy-making related to the digital divide, digital literacy, and digital inclusion needs to bring public libraries into the discussions, designs, and decisions.
Policy

• Policy-making related to the digital divide, digital literacy, and digital inclusion needs to bring public libraries into the discussions, designs, and decisions

• Libraries need to take more initiative in terms of advocacy
Future research

• Evaluation and assessment – measuring the effectiveness of literacy and inclusion programs, identifying best practices from programs, and determining the most useful ways to improve existing efforts

• A greater focus on policy analysis of the roles of digital literacy and digital inclusion
Future research

- More data and greater understanding about who is using the digital literacy and digital inclusion programs in libraries, the ways in which these patrons are benefiting, and the ways to create programs to draw and help other underserved and disadvantaged groups not currently being served.