**MEDIA LITERACY SPEECH ATHENS**, **GREECE** DEC 1, 2018

* It used to be that libraries and librarians were keepers of authoritative information, but are we still? Do we have a monopoly on information access, on what is real?
* In the US, it used to be that your home town newspaper was an authoritative source (even if you knew it had a certain slant)
* And the evening news could be trusted and more or less believed
* I know this is different in different countries, but I do think with the rise of social media, citizen journalism, crowd-sourced content, etc (give other examples), there has been a shift in what is information.
* I sometimes now want to ask, whose information is that? Who put it out, where is it coming from and why?
* I actually think we have to work harder at know what is real when it comes to information, which is a bit ironic, given the proliferation of information today.
* There is so much information in the world today, that it is difficult to know what is real, what is merely sensational, or what is wrong and destructive
* I thought we’d take a moment to review some definitions of information literacy, because that’s really what we’re talking about, in a way, when we talk about media literacy
* *Information Literacy - the ability to know when there is a need for information, to be able to find, identify, evaluate, and effectively use that information for the issue or problem at hand.*
* *Digital Literacy - Digital literacy is the knowledge, skills, and behaviors used in a broad range of digital devices such as smartphones, tablets, laptops and desktop PCs, all of which are seen as a network rather than computing devices.*
* *Media Literacy - the ability to access, analyze, evaluate and create messages in a wide variety of forms.*
* So we are living in an era where content is created by anyone; by you, me, the traditional media, bloggers with a certain agenda, wikepedia (crowd-sourced by lay people)
* We’ve all heard a lot recently about “fake news;” it’s become easy to accuse the mainstream media, which also used to be considered an authoritative source, of perpetrating erroneous information.
* Academics and media practitioners have started using the term “disinformation” since the term “fake news” has been distorted
* Definitions of disinformation:
* *False information which is intended to mislead, especially propaganda issued by a government organization to a rival power or the media (Google)*
* *False information deliberately and often covertly spread (as by the planting of rumors) in order to influence public opinion or obscure the truth (Merriam-Webster dictionary)*
* *False information spread in order to deceive people (Cambridge Dictionary)*
* Many of us read what we want to read and live in an information echo chamber: the news we choose reflects our own beliefs and reinforces them
* Rise of social media – need to be responsible users of information; we need to help our library users understand the importance of information sources (authoritative or otherwise), the appropriate use of technology, the safe use of technology (esp for young people)
* Media literacy is for all – from very young children, to teens to adults
* Show IIP video: <https://share.america.gov/how-to-spot-disinformation-video/>
* Many information practitioners are concerned about a lack of media literacy and are beginning to look at ways to work with the public to be more media savvy. These include library associations, NGOs, school systems and ministries of education.
* Examples of what libraries and ALA are doing in ML:
* The American Library Association started a pilot project with 5 libraries last year to train library staff to adapt existing media literacy training to offer programs and training to adults in their communities. ALA partnered with the Center for News Literacy at Stony Brook University in New York to develop content appropriate for adult learners.
* The cohort teams will attend an in-person training and use their skills to conduct related adult public programs in their communities. Team members will also provide feedback on the training and serve as advisers to, and beta testers for, the development of a corresponding web-based curriculum for the library field.

<http://www.ala.org/tools/programming/media-literacy-your-library>

* YALSA, the Young Adult section of ALA has hosted online webinars for librarians with simple tools to help young people decode and deconstruct misleading articles. This was offered free to YALSA members; YALSA partnered with “The Lamp” an NGO focused on media literacy and civics education.

<http://www.ala.org/yalsa/using-media-literacy-stop-fake-news-cycle>

<http://thelamp.org/>

* IFLA has a “how to spot fake news” poster
* Examples of NGOs: Newseum, Harvard Kennedy School, etc.
* Resource sheet to hand out
* I encourage you to develop your own resources or partner with those organizations in Greece that are working in the area of media literacy
* I believe our democracies depend on us – as librarians who defend access to information – authoritative information, information from a variety of sources and a variety of viewpoints
* And I believe it is our duty to teach the next generation of library users and readers how to access and use information, as we have always done.
* Thank you.