Book Review


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This text is a follow-up to Godwin and Parker’s *Information literacy meets library 2.0*, published in 2008, and is intended to examine developments made in information literacy (IL) instruction and Web 2.0 since that book, identifying how IL practice will progress beyond library 2.0. The largest section of the book includes a number of case studies from LIS practitioners describing their experiences of using Web 2.0 tools and social media when developing IL programmes and library services. The text is highly skewed towards Higher Education (HE) libraries. Both of the editors work in HE so this focus reflects their area of expertise, but I felt that other sectors were somewhat under-represented, with all but one of the case studies focusing on HE. However, this text is a useful addition to the literature in this area and would be of interest specifically to those in the HE sector involved in development and delivery of IL teaching.

The book is divided into three sections and is well balanced in its organisation and structure. Godwin has written the opening and closing chapters, providing a strong introduction and summary of the topic and the themes explored. The first section explores developments in IL practice and Web 2.0 since the first book and identifies recent trends in this area. The second, and largest, section consists of 11 case studies highlighting a range of ways that practitioners are engaging with social media in their IL instruction and their library service in general. The final section examines the impact of these developments and suggests how libraries can move forward beyond Web 2.0. The chapters in the first and third sections examine the key theory in this area, while the case studies offer practical applications of this theory. I found that this move from theory to practice and back again was necessary in order to make the themes examined throughout more meaningful and accessible to the reader.

The key theories introduced in the first section of the book are pertinent to the case studies. From the complementary concepts of transliteracy and informed learning, which inform the development of new IL curricula, to the mobile and social web, fostering opportunities for collaboration and increased engagement with library users, we are presented with a range of innovative ways to exploit social media to enhance IL instruction. Some of the case studies first examine the concept from a theoretical perspective before explaining how this has been put into practice, while others are more factual in tone, describing what was done and how it worked. I would suggest that the latter style is more accessible, particularly for professionals looking for ideas to incorporate into their own IL practice. An understanding of the theory will be valuable to LIS students researching the topic, however, so both elements are essential to the text.

Throughout the book it is inferred that the profession has moved on from library 2.0, evidenced by the discussion of the impact of social media and the semantic web on information seeking behaviours. This transition also necessitates a move beyond IL. Other ‘new’ literacies are considered throughout, including digital literacy, media literacy, metaliteracy and transliteracy. While reading the book I did wonder if this discussion of terminology was necessary or just an exercise in semantics. This concern is articulated by Godwin towards the end of the text, debating the most appropriate literacy for the information environment beyond Web 2.0. It is clear that a reimagining of IL is required. Many of the contributors to the book have already adopted innovative techniques for successful IL instruction in this new environment.

It was disappointing that there was only one case study from outside HE – an experience from a school library in developing skills for the transition to HE – especially as the author identifies school
libraries and public libraries as sectors of key significance, presenting particular challenges and opportunities for IL. The absence of case studies is perhaps representative of a slower rate of uptake of Web 2.0 in these sectors, but I felt that this was not explained fully. The first two chapters in the final section of the book focus on public libraries and school libraries respectively, thus beginning the discussion on IL practice and Web 2.0 use within these key sectors of LIS.

Overall this text is a valuable contribution to the literature on IL practice in the Web 2.0 world and beyond. One minor criticism would be that some of the uses of social media tools described relate not specifically to IL but to user engagement initiatives and marketing activities. However, this use of Web 2.0 is acknowledged by Godwin in his concluding chapter. The case studies will be of particular interest to HE librarians looking for inspiration in using social media to enhance their IL practice, while the exploration of the key theories and concepts will be valuable to all LIS professionals and students interested in this topic.