

# Poland

## Information Literacy State-of-the-Art Report<sup>1</sup>

### /June 2011/

#### Introduction

In Poland, the concept of information literacy (IL) is recognized, thanks to publications edited during past ten years. But it is still not popular enough in the professional environment. And still, there is not any integrated system or programme embracing all forms and areas of education for IL (Cisek, 2006). However, libraries do a lot in the domain of IL (Derfert-Wolf, 2009). They started to mark the difference between a traditional library training and the training of information skills. Librarians realize how important is the cooperation with academics and integration IL into curricula. But there are still many barriers among which the most crucial one is the fact that librarians are not perceived by the academics as partners for cooperation. Thus, the cooperation is not common and often it bases on individual, semi-private agreements between the librarian and lecturer.

Ewa Rozkosz (2010) postulated the examination and attempt in adaptation and introduction on Polish field one of the foreign IL patterns which were internationally approved. In her opinion, while waiting for national standards, Polish libraries have nothing to loose in adaptation the foreign ones. In her opinion this could help at least in breaking the stereotypes about boring library instructions.

#### Turning point

The important moment in Polish IL was an establishment of the Information Literacy Committee within the Polish Librarians Association (pl. *Stowarzyszenie Bibliotekarzy*

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<sup>1</sup> This report is edited in font Apolonia. The font was designed in Poland in 2010 and it is especially adjusted to spelling and tradition of Polish language. We tend to widely promote this new font. The installation kit is accessible at <http://www.polskalitera.pl>.

*Polskich*) structure in December 2010. The mission of the committee is to bring IL into Polish LIS environment and to undertake initiatives which would promote and popularize IL in all types of libraries. In the programme of committee for years 2011-2013<sup>2</sup> there are seven long-term goals:

Goal 1 – to initiate programmes aiming at increase of information competences of Polish libraries users;

Goal 2 – to organize scientific meetings and other educational events aiming at increase of librarians' knowledge and competences in the domain of IL;

Goal 3 – to elaborate an uniform dictionary of Polish terms related to IL;

Goal 4 – to conduct information activities;

Goal 5 – to elaborate Polish IL guides and manuals;

Goal 6 – to prepare Polish IL State-of-the-art reports;

Goal 7 – to cooperate with international organizations and institutions dealing with IL.

The new-established IL Committee is named *Komisja do spraw Edukacji Informacyjnej* (en. *Eduactional Information Committee*) and the term 'edukacja informacyjna' is going to be promoted in Polish LIS environment, as the literal one, 'alfabetyzacja informacyjna', is widely negated and criticize (see the further part of this report related to Polish terminology).

Currently the Committee is working on:

- translation of key-documents: *The Prague Declaration* and *The Alexandra Proclamation*;

- translation of *Guidlines on Information Literacy for Lifelong Learning*;

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<sup>2</sup> Program Komisji ds. Edukacji Informacyjnej na lata 2011-2013 (2011). Retrieved May 21, 2011, from [http://sbp.pl/repository/SBP/sekcje\\_komisje/komisja\\_ds\\_edukacji\\_informacyjnej/Program\\_Komisji\\_ds\\_Edukacji\\_Informacyjnej\\_na\\_lata\\_2011-2013.pdf](http://sbp.pl/repository/SBP/sekcje_komisje/komisja_ds_edukacji_informacyjnej/Program_Komisji_ds_Edukacji_Informacyjnej_na_lata_2011-2013.pdf)

- conducting a survey aiming at exploring the scope of IL education in Polish LIS academic institutes (university departments of LIS studies);
- conducting a survey aiming at exploring the scope of IL education in Polish academic libraries (the existing content of library instructions).

### **Terminology**

As written above, one of the goal of new committee is to elaborate an uniform dictionary of Polish terms related to IL. Why is it regarded as much important?

In Polish literature related to IL, the problems with terminology and definition are widely discussed. Up to now there is no official translation of the term 'information literacy'. Probably because there is still no official institution or association which would take the responsibility for legal introducing of IL concept and standards to Polish education system. In Polish literature we can meet various term, describing IL. The literal translation is 'alfabetyzacja informacyjna', the term used the most often in the literature, but not too handy in practical use as 'alfabetyzacja' is connected with the teaching illiterate people reading and writing skills and in the common use it can have the pejorative association – if someone wants to give me the course of literacy, does it mean that I am illiterate?

Presumably that is why the authors who have introduced and described the IL in Polish literature, very often avoided the term 'alfabetyzacja informacyjna' and replaced it by more descriptive terminology. Even in the lately edited English-Polish LIS Dictionary<sup>3</sup>, 'information literacy' is translated descriptively as 'umiejętności informacyjne, kształcenie w zakresie korzystania z informacji' [*information skills, education in the domain of information use*].

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<sup>3</sup>Tomaszczyk, J. (2009) : Information Literacy. In *Angielsko-polski słownik informacji naukowej i bibliotekoznawstwa*. Katowice. Retrieved May 21, 2011, from <http://www.sbc.org.pl/dlibra/docmetadata?id=16671&from=publication&>

Sometimes Polish authors (for example Próchnicka or Rozkosz) prefer to use the original English term, probably to avoid this translation diversity.

Lidia Derfert-Wolf (2009) collated the English synonyms and terms related to IL and their Polish equivalents. It is presented in the table below. The term 'alfabetyzm informacyjny' is listed on the last place in the table, after all descriptive definitions. It can be caused by the fact that Derfert-Wolf personally does not like this term, what she underlines in her articles, conference papers and discussions. For the purpose of the study, the French equivalents found in the literature were also included in this table to give the total spectrum of terms in three languages discussed in this research.

Table 1. English and Polish synonyms and terms related to IL

ENGLISH SYNONYMS AND RELATED TERMS	POLISH EQUIVALENTS
information skills; IL skills; IL competencies; information competence; information competence skills; information problem solving; information fluency; information handling; information empowerments; information technology (IT) skills; information and communication (ICT) skills; ICT literacy; digital literacy; network literacy; e-literacy; media literacy; infoliteracy; user education;	umiejętność korzystania z informacji; umiejętność posługiwania się informacją; umiejętność wyszukiwania informacji w różnych źródłach i mediach, jej selekcji, krytycznej oceny oraz przetwarzania jej na własny użytek; biegłość w użytkowaniu informacji; umiejętności informacyjne; kompetencje informacyjne; edukacja informacyjna; edukacja medialna; sprawność informacyjna; sprawne korzystanie z informacji; świadomość informacyjna; alfabetyzm informacyjny.

library instruction; library orientation; bibliographic instructions; instruction in information skills.	
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Source: Derfert-Wolf, 2009a, p. 190.

Hanna Batorowska (2009) posits that in Poland, the term 'IL' is related too often only to the basic information searching skills or to the trainings of these skills, while in the world literature, particularly in Anglo-Saxon one, IL obtained long time ago the rank of a scientific discipline, derived from the documentation and information sciences.

Also Ewa Kurkowska (2008) discusses the issues related to Polish terminology and translation. She writes that the term 'IL' seems to be quite abstract as in the original it means the elementary reading and writing skills. However, being explored for a long time by the libraries and education environment, it gained the more universal meaning and now it signifies the process of preparing to normal functioning in the society.

But, as she concluded, as long as there is a discussion on the IL concept and terminology in the international literature, and it is still ambiguous, in Polish literature there will not be the agreement on one term.

### **Products for users – chosen examples**

There is a long tradition of user education in Polish librarianship and academic libraries frequently offer instruction of chosen or even all aspects of IL (Cisek, 2006). In fact all academic libraries offer the library instructions at least for BA first-year students. Many academic libraries have also the online version of courses - for example The Nicolaus Copernicus University Library (Torun) or The University of

Warsaw Library. The University of Lower Silesia Library (Wrocław) prepared even a short instruction in a form of comic<sup>4</sup>.

However, we still do not have the national standards, thus the programme base is not elaborated and courses offered by libraries are not homogenous.

In 2010 in Krakow, a manual *MedLibTrain: become a Belter information competences teacher : a manual not only for medical librarians* (pl. *MedLibTrain : zostań lepszym nauczycielem kompetencji informatycznych : przewodnik nie tylko dla bibliotekarzy medycznych*) was published. The manual is dedicated to librarians who organize library courses. It explains how to ameliorate relations between library and faculties, how to recognize users' information needs and how to conduct trainings and evaluate their effectiveness. The manual bases on Norwegian medical libraries educational models.

Bibweb and Login: e-learning courses for Polish librarians. Introduced in 2003 by German Bertelsmann Foundation in cooperation with the University of Warsaw Library and Polish Librarians Association, Bibweb was the first online course dedicated to librarians. It consisted of three separate modules which offer practical knowledge on how to use the Internet in everyday operation of the library or any other public institution. Near 7500 users completed the course. It ended in 2010.

In the beginning of 2011 another course started. Login:biblioteka is the training designed and financed by Information Society Development Foundation, prepared by the Torun University Institute of Information Science and run by the University of Warsaw Library. It helps librarians from smaller cities to learn how to identify needs of local communities and how to meet them, it also contains lessons concerning active promotion of library collections and services. At present the pilot phase of the course is running.

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<sup>4</sup>Akcja biblioteka (2010). Retrieved May 21, 2011, from

[http://biblioteka.dsw.edu.pl/assets/files/SZKOLENIA/Akcja\\_biblioteka.pdf](http://biblioteka.dsw.edu.pl/assets/files/SZKOLENIA/Akcja_biblioteka.pdf)

## Communication / Projects

Alfabetyzacja Informacyjna – Information Literacy Blog  
<http://alfabetyzacjainformacyjna.blogspot.com/>. Created by Ewa Rozkosz, a librarian from University of Lower Silesia Library and, since December 2010, a chair of IL Committee in Polish Librarians Association. On her blog, information about events, publications, applications standards and IL projects are posted. Ewa got in touch with people from Poland and abroad involved in IL projects. She was invited to promote and coordinate the InfoLit Global database in Poland.

EBIB. Electronic Library – Portal for Librarians - <http://www.nowyebib.info/en/> . EBIB is a professional library service that has existed since 1999 and is being created for Polish librarians. At the beginning EBIB was an independent entity, but since 2002 till 2010 EBIB functioned within the structures of the Polish Librarians Association as the Commission for Electronic Publishing. In March 2010 the EBIB Association was established and this organization is at present the official publisher. EBIB publishes the *EBIB Bulletin* - a monthly open access journal, that includes: essays, reports, analysis, announcements, letters, discussions/polemics, agenda (upcoming conferences, other events). Each issue has its separate theme<sup>5</sup>. The iss. 1/2005 was dedicated to information literacy (see below in section Publications).

The EMPATIC (Empowering Autonomous Learning Through Information Competencies)<sup>6</sup> international project that tends to create a framework for the effective exploitation of the results of the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) and related programmes referring to Information Literacy. There are five international partners involved in this project. Poland is represented by the Jagiellonian University Institute of Information and Library Science (Krakow). The other four are: MDR Partners (UK), Istituto di Ricerca sull'Impresa e lo Sviluppo (Italy), Technical University of Crete (Greece) and The Turkish Librarians Association.

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<sup>5</sup> All information about EBIB sought from <http://www.nowyebib.info/en/who-we-are>

<sup>6</sup> The EMPATIC. Retrieved from Retrieved May 21, 2011, from <http://empat-ic.eu/eng>.

MedLib Train. The common project of Polish and Norway medical librarians, realized by Medical Library of the Jagiellonian University Collegium Medium and Norwegian Library Association, Section for Medicine and Health. The project resulted in edition of the manual described earlier.

### **Conferences/Workshops**

June 2011. The EMPATIC Project. In the frame of the project, in June 2011, An International Workshop on Information Literacy Development in the School Sector was organized at the Jagiellonian University<sup>7</sup>. It gathered LIS specialists from many regions of the country. The aim of the workshop was to discuss strategies, models and methods of IL development in the school learning sector across the European Union and their implementation into the Polish education. The starting point for the discussion were selected examples of the appropriate IL good practices in the education systems in Europe and existing Information Literacy standards for schools of different levels and types presented by guest-speakers from Finland, Hungary, Turkey and UK.

May 2011. Conference organized at the Pedagogical University of Krakow, *Library in Educational Space. Functions and Challenges in 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (pl. *Biblioteka w przestrzeni edukacyjnej. Funkcje i wyzwania w XXI wieku*)<sup>8</sup>. The conference presentation were searching the answer on question what is the place of the library in today's educational space and how library should support a development process on each educational level. Are libraries ready for future challenges which information users will face?

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<sup>7</sup> The Workshop Blog is available at <http://informationliteracyintheschoolsector.blogspot.com>

<sup>8</sup> Abstracts available at <http://www.up.krakow.pl/biblio/konferencja/streszczenia.html>

September 2010 and September 2009 – two editions of Conference *E-learning: a challenge for libraries* (pl. *E-learning wyzwaniem dla bibliotek*)<sup>9</sup>. The purpose of the conference is to promote e-learning as a modern way of librarians teaching-learning in the information society era. The conferences familiarize topics related to theory, didactics and methodic of e-learning. A remote teaching is described as a tool enriching and enlarging the offer of library services adopted to information society needs.

November 2009. VI Polish LIS Students Scientific Clubs Conference <sup>10</sup> *Information Literacy in light of needs of 21<sup>st</sup> century society* (pl. *Information Literacy w świetle potrzeb społeczeństwa XXI wieku*). During this conference, LIS students were discussing about many different issued related to widely understood IL.

### **Publications** (*non exhaustive list*)

#### **1. IL – general Works**

Batorowska H. (2005). *Od alfabetyzacji informacyjnej do kultury informacyjnej*. Retrieved May 21, 2011, from <http://www.up.krakow.pl/ktime/ref2005/batorows.pdf>

Batorowska, H. (2009). *Kultura informacyjna w perspektywie zmian w edukacji*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo SBP.

*Biuletyn EBIB, 1/2005(62)*. Special issue dedicated to users education. Retrieved May 21, 2011, from <http://ebib.oss.wroc.pl/2005/62>

Cisek, S. (2006). *Information literacy in Poland – 2006*. Presentation given on UNESCO-CEI workshop on Information Literacy Initiatives in Central and South East European Countries. Retrieved May 21, 2011, from <http://www.slideshare.net/sabinacisek/information-literacy-in-poland-2006>

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<sup>9</sup> The 2009 programme available at <http://www.konferencja-bib.oeiizk.waw.pl/program.html> and 2010 programme at <http://www.konferencja-elearning.oeiizk.waw.pl/program.html>. Papers from both conferences were published in print proceedings, too.

<sup>10</sup> The programme and abstracts available at [http://www-old.inib.uj.edu.pl/kolo\\_naukowe/konferencje/konferencja\\_il\\_2009\\_program.pdf](http://www-old.inib.uj.edu.pl/kolo_naukowe/konferencje/konferencja_il_2009_program.pdf)

Derfert-Wolf, L. (2005). Information literacy – koncepcje i nauczanie umiejętności informacyjnych. *Biuletyn EBIB 1(62)*. Retrieved May 21, 2011, from <http://ebib.oss.wroc.pl/2005/62/derfert.php>

Kurkowska, E. J. (2008). Information literacy - problemy terminologiczne. *Toruńskie Studia Bibliologiczne 1*, 71-81.

Kurkowska, E. (2004). *Edukacja informacyjna a rozwój społeczeństwa wiedzy*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Warszawa.

Próchnicka, M. (2007). Information literacy. Nowa sztuka wyzwolona XXI wieku. In Dzieńkowska, J. (ed.), *Książka, biblioteka, informacja - między podziałami a wspólnotą* (pp. 433-445). Kielce: Wydawnictwo Akademii Świętokrzyskiej.

## **2. IL in schools**

Antczak, M. (2010). *Rola bibliotek i bibliotekarzy szkolnych w edukacji społeczeństwa informacyjnego na tle przeobrażeń oświatowych w Polsce w latach 1989-2007*. Łódź: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego.

Antczak, M. (2010). Rola bibliotekarzy w nauczaniu umiejętności informacyjnych gimnazjalistów: wybrane zagadnienia. *Przegląd Biblioteczny 1(78)*, 63-64.

Jasiewicz, J. (2011). *Kompetencje informacyjne młodzieży. Analiza – stan faktyczny – kształcenie na przykładzie Polski, Niemiec i Wielkiej Brytanii*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Warszawa.

Kędzierska, B. (2007). *Kompetencje informacyjne w kształceniu ustawicznym*. Warszawa : Instytut Badań Edukacyjnych.

Piotrowska, R. (2011). *Edukacja informacyjna w polskiej szkole*. Warszawa : Wydawnictwo SBP.

## **3. IL in academic environment**

Derfert-Wolf, L. (2009). Information literacy - kształcenie umiejętności informacyjnych w bibliotekach akademickich. In Antczak-Sabala B., Kowalska M. & Tkaczyk L. (ed.), *Przestrzeń informacyjna biblioteki akademickiej - tradycja i nowoczesność : praca zbiorowa* (pp. 185-208). Toruń.

Grygorowicz A. & Kraszewska E. (2007). *Propozycje standardów w zakresie edukacji użytkowników polskich bibliotek medycznych*. „*Annales Academiae Medicae*”, nr 37, s. 167- 170.

[http://www.annales.gumed.edu.pl/attachment/attachment/5151/19-an37\\_Grygorowicz-Propozycje\\_stand.pdf](http://www.annales.gumed.edu.pl/attachment/attachment/5151/19-an37_Grygorowicz-Propozycje_stand.pdf) [retrieved 21 May 2011].

Niedźwiedzka, B. & Hunskaar, I. (ed.). (2010). *MedLibTrain : zostań lepszym nauczycielem kompetencji informatycznych : przewodnik nie tylko dla bibliotekarzy medycznych*. Krakow. Retrieved May 21, 2011, from [http://jbc.bj.uj.edu.pl/dlibra/dlibra/docmetadata?id=21288&from=&dirids=1&ver\\_id=419605&lp=1&QI=A60D222A9AE983B2D6B9F05CE4B8527F-1](http://jbc.bj.uj.edu.pl/dlibra/dlibra/docmetadata?id=21288&from=&dirids=1&ver_id=419605&lp=1&QI=A60D222A9AE983B2D6B9F05CE4B8527F-1)

Rozkosz, E. (2010). *Information literacy w bibliotekach akademickich. Standardy kształcenia* (in press)

## Perspectives

Activities described in this report are small steps, but they are necessary for Polish LIS professionals society to understand and accept their new role – information trainers. That will be a good introduction to the next initiatives in developing of Polish IL. We hope to increase the number of researches related to IL which would be a base for introduction the practical initiatives in the domain. We want to be stronger engaged in international undertakings to participate actively in the world IL community. And also, a publication of national standards and IL manuals for librarians are urgent needs.

In September 2011, we are going to organize for the first time in Poland IL Training for Trainers Workshop. We hope to gather approximately 30 academic librarians and elaborate together the IL programmes for three cycles of studies (BA, MA, PhD).

The fact that since 2009 Poland has been represented in IFLA IL Standing Committee is also a formal step to bring our country closer to worldwide IL initiatives.

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