

Participating in Improving the Public Media and Information Literacy in Libraries

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Abstract

The spread of disinformation has increased the difficulty in the prevention and control of COVID-19 and information governance. To improve the public's ability to recognize disinformation, fundamentally speaking, we need to vigorously improve the media information literacy of the public. Libraries have the responsibility to carry out the public media information literacy education. Based on the analysis of the importance and main advantages of the libraries to carry out the public media information literacy education, this paper focuses on the construction of a scientific and efficient media information literacy education system and its main ways.

Keywords

Disinformation; Infordemic; Media Information Literacy; Library.

1. Introduction

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, rumors and fake information about the epidemic situation and prevention have emerged and continue to spread. It was called "Infordemic" by WHO, which is a combination of the word "Information" and "Epidemic". This paper will focus on the importance of improving Media and Information Literacy in defeating the "infordemic" and what measures the library will take to improve public Media and Information Literacy.

2. What is "infordemic"?

"Infordemic" is authoritatively interpreted by Dr Sylvie Briand, who is the director of global infectious disease prevention. The outbreak of "infordemic" is associated with the virus outbreak, she said [1]. It means that too much information (both right and wrong) makes it difficult to find trustworthy sources of information and guidance that can be relied on, and may even endanger people's health. The WHO General Director -Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said that misinformation made the work of health workers more difficult and diverted the attention of decision makers, creating confusion and conveying fear and unease to the general public [2]. Hence, recognizing, understanding and controlling "infordemic" is not only helpful to people's scientific response to the epidemic, but also helps countries around the world to overcome the epidemic as soon as possible.

"Infordemic" became a new term in the conference's priority list of research content by global scientists. It is considered to be as globally infectious as the COVID-19 by the World Health Organization and governments.

3. Importance of Public Media and Information Literacy

To control and defeat "infordemic", fundamentally, it needs to improve the Public Media and Information Literacy. "Media and Information Literacy" is the abbreviation of "media literacy" and "information literacy", which refers to the ability of people to choose, understand, question, evaluate, create, and to respond to speculation in the face of various media information [3].

Media information consciousness, media information ability and media information ethics are the three important components of Media and Information Literacy. The theme of UNESCO's annual "Global Media and Information Literacy Week" in 2019 is "MIL Citizens: Informed, Engaged, Empowered".

The connotation of this theme is that media and information literacy is conducive to empowering citizens and safeguarding their right to know and participate. People with good media and information literacy are good at using multi-source information to enrich cognition, promote dialogue and stay away from rumors. Therefore, improving the Media and Information Literacy of the public is the fundamental guarantee to control and overcome the "infodemic", which can effectively overcome the secondary harm caused by false information and rumors, and minimize the harm caused by "infodemic".

4. The Advantages of Libraries Enhancing Public Media and Information Literacy

4.1. Using the Existing Platform Advantages

UNESCO and IFLA which is the most important institutional in global information literacy education have repeatedly mentioned that libraries should be the main part of information literacy education. [Table 1](#) list the representative declarations by UNESCO and IFLA.

Table 1. The Representative Declarations of MIL

Numble	Titles	Years	Aims
1	Moscow Declaration on Media and Information Literacy [4]	2012	Defining the main part of media and information literacy education as the Government, education, media and youth organizations, libraries, archives, museums and non-governmental organizations.
2	Youth Declaration on Media and Information Literacy	2016	Referring to the role of media and libraries in the development of MIL (media and information literacy), which cannot be ignored.
3	IFLA Statement on Digital Literacy [5]	2017	Requiring libraries to take the development of readers' digital literacy as one of the core services through full planning, design, budget and personnel input.
4	Global Media and Information Literacy Assessment Framework	2019	Calling on libraries to widely carry out MIL training and open media education centers.

"The Law of the People's Republic of China on Public Libraries" also regards improving citizens' scientific and cultural quality and social civilization as the core functions of libraries. It can be seen that the library, as the main part of information literacy education and its educational function, has been fully recognized.

In addition to the policy advantages, the library accumulated talent advantages, rich information resources advantages, unique geographical location and site advantages in the long-term information literacy education, as well as the advantages of new technology

application are incomparable to other institutions. The force of the above factors provides a good guarantee for the library to popularize public information literacy education in the whole society.

4.2. Extending Information Literacy Education

Take public Media and Information Literacy into the library information literacy education system, such as educating the public how to identify online rumors in the right way[6].As early as 2016, IFLA published eight tips on how to identify fake news, including examining the source of information, reading the full title, querying the author's information, examining arguments in the news, verifying dates, verifying whether it was a joke, verifying your bias against the news, and consulting experts[7].

In addition, the relevant government departments can also help the Internet users with teaching people how to identify social media rumors. On the one hand, search engine tools such as Baidu can be used to see if there are similar online rumors and initially identify suspicious information; on the other hand, we can check reports published by official network platforms or news media and other authoritative organizations.

4.3. Using of Online Learning Methods Such as MOOC or Micro-Classes

It has been proved that learning and communication can enrich the knowledge of health prevention and enhance information immunity. as a new type of network learning resource, MOOC and micro-class have attracted much attention in recent years. During the epidemic, the Ministry of Education ordered the "suspension of classes". Online education was popularized in this special period. Public information literacy education can take this opportunity to spread widely.

At present, there are more and more learning resources about Media and Information Literacy on the Internet and mobile network platform, which can be obtained by the public through the network. For example, Chinese universities MOOC have published more than 10 classes of Information Literacy, such as "Information Literacy and practice "," Information Literacy: a New engine for efficiency and lifelong learning "," Information Retrieval "and so on. These resources can not only help learners to improve their media information ability and enhance their information immunity, but also help them to enhance their ability to solve practical problems.

4.4. Designing of Personalized Education Programmes at Different Levels

As a fundamental human right, media and information literacy (MIL) is relevant to the personal, national and social development of the public. The library and other related social subjects should take the responsibility to improve the quality of public information literacy education by reforming the educational mode, innovating the educational paradigm, expanding the educational content and strengthening the teachers' personal accomplishment.

In addition, on evaluating the level of public information literacy, a individualized education scheme should be designed for different audiences to ensure the best educational effect. For example, for children, the emphasis is to guide children to identify the authenticity of all kinds of information media correctly, such as television, the Internet and mobile phones, and to help children learning the ability to receive media information critically. For older parents, it is need to help them improving the identification and self-control of online information, reminding them not to trust WeChat group's gossip and spread unconfirmed information on social media.

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