An investigation into Scottish teenagers’ information literacy and search skills.

David Brazier ¹, Geoff Walton ² and Morgan Harvey ¹

¹ [d.brazier, morgan.Harvey]@northumbria.ac.uk
² g.walton@mmu.ac.uk
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Introduction

- IL skills essential to effectively participate in our modern information society.

- Students introduced to concepts at school and given tasks that require these skills i.e. report writing* ¹

- It is not enough to provide information, education systems should ensure that today's students are empowered to learn and to take their place in the learning society. ²

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1. Eisenberg, 1990
2. Yu, 2006

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*Eisenberg, 1990
²Yu, 2006
Related Work

- ‘... their apparent facility with computers disguises some worrying problems ... young people have a poor understanding of their information needs and thus find it difficult to develop effective search strategies’. ¹

- pre-university students are unable to construct effective search queries. ²

- and rarely employ effective search strategies or systemically plan how to find the information they need. ³

¹ Nicolas, Rowlands & Huntington, 2008, p.12
² Harrop, 2012
³ Coiro, 2007
Related Work cont.

- leading them often to simply cite/copy top-ranked resources without assessing their quality. ¹

- needs to be countered early on in a child’s development as there are questions whether student information behaviours can be changed once they enter Higher Education. ²

- identifying actual behaviours and performance is imperative
  - ESOL Post graduates were unable to perceive their performance correctly, often judging high performance when the opposite was true. ³

1. Smith & Hepworth, 2007
2. Rowlands, 2008
3. Brazier & Harvey, 2017
Methodology


- Situated as a simulated work task
  - two research topics to write a report on, in reality they will not be required to write the report.

- use a bespoke search system to collect a small set of relevant documents for their chosen topic over a time-constrained period.
Methodology cont.

- Search system based on the TREC AQUAINT collection,
  - a large set of over a million documents from three large news agencies collected between 1996 and 2000

- Pre-defined search topics associated with it
  - Initial 15 topics > 4 topics selected by school representatives (librarian and 2 teachers)

- Relevance judgements are per-topic evaluations indicating which documents in the collection are relevant

- Participants fill in pre- and post-task questionnaires to self-assess various elements related to search
Before you begin the next search task shown at the bottom of the page ("tropical storms"), we would like to ask you a few quick questions about it. How much do you agree or disagree with the following: Don’t forget to click the submit button after you’ve filled out the form!

I know a lot about this topic already
Disagree ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Agree

I am interested in this topic
Disagree ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Agree

It is clear how to complete this task
Disagree ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Agree

Overall, I think this will be a difficult task
Disagree ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Agree

I think it will be difficult to find relevant documents for this task
Disagree ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Agree

I think it will be difficult to decide when I have enough information to complete this task
Disagree ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Agree

Submit

Current search task

tropical storms

What tropical storms (hurricanes and typhoons) have caused significant property damage and loss of life?