

Project Information Literacy

e-Feasibility Report
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A progress report about plans for a large-scale, national study of college students and their research habits. The proposed project is undergoing a feasibility review through May 2008, as issues of institutional interest, funding, and logistics are studied.

Update from the Director



Welcome to the first e-Feasibility Report for Project Information Literacy. I am Alison Head, the project's director and the study's principal investigator.

To begin, let me provide a little background. Project Information Literacy plans to be a large-scale national research study about college students' research habits.

The goal of this collaborative study is to fill in some of the "missing pieces" of the information literacy puzzle by studying information literacy through the lens of the student experience and in the context of the digital age.

"With the proliferation of online resources and new technologies, how do college students define the information needs they may have and in turn, how do they locate, evaluate, select, and use the information that is needed for course-related research?"

We are planning to collect data from institutions of all types, (i.e., community colleges, state college and universities, and private colleges and universities), which are located across the U.S.

The feasibility review stage is occurring now and will last through May 2008. Questions of funding, sampling, and logistics are being addressed in great detail during this time.

Ultimately, our answers to these questions will decide the future direction of the research project. Our hope is to begin the first phase of the project in Fall 2008.

So far, we have heard from many librarians, faculty, and administrators, including many of you, who have been highly favorable and encouraging about our plans for the project.

As I write this first project update, we have 31 different campuses in our study's voluntary, "open" sample (a random sampling of institutions is also planned).

In a short time, we have determined there is a strong interest in a multi-campus collaborative effort. With these pieces in place, we have begun to intensely focus on securing funding.

Currently, a funding proposal for the project is under review for a Google Research Award. Another formal request for project sponsorship has been made and is being reviewed by Gale Publishing executives.

We plan on sending you email updates, like this one, as we learn more. The [project site](#) will be frequently updated, too.

If you have comments, ideas, or questions, we hope to [hear from you](#).

Project Information Literacy is, indeed, an exciting and a rewarding prospect--the only information literacy research project of its kind.

Even at this early stage, the project is full of great possibilities.

I thank you for your comments, ideas, and, of course, your inspiring support about the plans for this project. ❖



Who's in the Voluntary Sample?

Now you, too, can watch Project Information Literacy's voluntary sample grow.

Using Google Maps, we were able to construct an interactive map showing a running tally of our voluntary sample on the Project Information Literacy project site.



It's easy. On the [project site](#), scroll down to find the map.

"Point and click" on a blue icon on the map to find out the name of the school with an "expressed interest" in participation, the location of the school, and its undergraduate enrollment.

The map will automatically show updates of new participating campuses as we add them; usually on a daily basis.

Just in case you are wondering, our research plan is to have two samples in the study. One sample will be an "open" and voluntary one, which the Google map is currently tracking.

Another sample will be randomly selected from a standardized list of institutions. With the random sample, we can ensure our findings are generalizable to larger populations. During data analysis, we plan to compare the two samples. ❖

First Monday Podcast

[First Monday](#), the international online journal that publishes research about the Internet, featured a podcast about Project Information Literacy.



[Tune in and find out more](#)

about the original information literacy study, conducted last year, and plans for Project Information Literacy.

The 15-minute interview is with Project Information Literacy's Director, Alison Head and First Monday Podcast Editors Joy Austria and A.J. Hanna and is in the February issue. ❖

Advisory Board in the Works

An advisory board for Project Information Literacy is currently being compiled. Board members will advise on key issues of funding, sampling, research design, and governance for Project Information Literacy.

To date, three highly qualified experts (who are profiled below) have agreed to generously donate their time and expertise to the advising a successful Project Information Literacy.

↔ **Peter Morville** is president and founder of [Semantic Studios](#), a leading information architecture, user experience, and findability consultancy.



Morville is widely recognized as a father of the information architecture field, and he serves as a passionate advocate for the critical roles that search and findability play in defining the user experience.

Morville is the author of [Ambient Findability](#) and the co-author with Lou Rosenfeld of [Information Architecture for the World Wide Web](#).

↔ **David Nasatir, Ph.D.** is an expert in research methods and teaches the field at U.C. Berkeley.



Nasatir has been providing consultation on the application of theories, research methods, and findings of the social and behavioral sciences for more than 40 years.

Nasatir advises in areas as diverse as organizational design, management techniques, social impact analysis, futures prediction, demographics, public opinion, survey research design, interviewer supervision, and data analysis.

↔ **Karen G. Schneider** is a writer, librarian, and national speaker who has published over 100 articles and two books, primarily covering Internet technologies and appearing in library trade publications.



Schneider's blog, [Free Range Librarian](#), is a widely read source of grumblings, musings, and profound insights about the impact of technology and the Internet on librarianship.

Schneider is the former Director of [Librarians' Internet Index](#) (LII), a publicly-funded Web site and weekly newsletter serving California, the nation, and the world. Among other resources, the LII site has over 20,000 links with entries to "good information resource sites," collaboratively maintained by a large network of librarians. ❖