

# Context

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

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## Information Literacy: The Key to Lifelong Learning

Have you ever heard of “data smog”? Data smog happens when too much information comes at us too quickly, and we need to make decisions without having the ability to navigate through the mass of information or to judge which facts are most reliable.

Information literacy (IL) is the solution to data smog. It’s not a new idea: the term “information literacy” has been around since at least the 1970s. IL has always been important, but the digitization of resources and the increasing complexity of the Internet have made it absolutely essential. Accessing information efficiently and effectively, evaluating it critically and

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competently, and using it accurately and creatively are vital skills, not only for teachers and students, but for everyone in today's society.

According to the *Association of College & Research Libraries*, information literacy is “the set of skills needed to find, retrieve, analyze, and use information.” An IL program is currently being developed by librarians from the Dalhousie Libraries, in close collaboration with faculty and administrators across campus. The purpose of the program is to make information literacy an integral component

“Information literacy is the solution to data smog.”

of every program at Dalhousie; its stated mission —“To enable our community to use information effectively to become independent life-long learners.” Funding has been obtained to appoint an Information Literacy Coordinator on campus. Sharon Longard, chair of the Libraries' Information Literacy committee, states: “Ideally, we'd like to have a structure in place to ensure every student has the opportunity to develop Information Literacy skills during their years of study at Dalhousie.”

### Benefits for Faculty

Everyone benefits from making IL skills a priority. Faculty who incorporate IL into their curriculum will have a clear idea of what students should be able to do in the course of the year. They will be able to design effective assignments that utilize IL skills and require their students to think and evaluate critically. There should be fewer cases of plagiarism to deal with.

### Even More Benefits for Students

For students, the practical advantages of acquiring IL skills are enormous. The Conference Board of

Canada cites “Manage information” as one of the “fundamental skills” in its document *Employability Skills 2000+*, solid proof that the benefits of information literacy extend well beyond the classroom.

Building on their IL skills as they progress from year to year, students should:

- develop critical thinking skills which are highly desired by employers
- be more successful academically, therefore more likely to stay and graduate
  - be able to do increasingly complex research
  - learn appropriate citation methods, resulting in less plagiarism
- learn transferable skills for independent lifelong learning

### Learn More, Get on Board!

Faculty members who would like to find out how to incorporate information literacy into their courses should consult with their subject librarian—the IL program is based firmly on collaboration. They may also wish to read our brochure at

[infolit.library.dal.ca/faculty/ILbrochure.pdf](http://infolit.library.dal.ca/faculty/ILbrochure.pdf) (a printed version is also available on request). The brochure features a definition of information literacy and its five competency standards, and provides practical information about the benefits of working with subject specialists.

Both students and faculty should consult the Dalhousie Libraries' information literacy website, which features links to resources such as examples of effective assignments, key readings, and a special tool for students: the Assignment Calculator. You'll find this invaluable resource at:

[infolit.library.dal.ca/](http://infolit.library.dal.ca/)

“For students the practical advantages of IL are enormous.”



## RefWorks Makes Compiling Bibliographies Easier

The first web-based bibliography manager is now available for students, faculty and staff at Dalhousie, thanks to a subscription purchased by the Dalhousie Libraries and Academic Computing Services.

*RefWorks* is an online bibliography and database manager that allows you to create your own personal database by importing references from text files or online databases. You can use these references in writing your papers, and automatically format the paper and the bibliography in seconds.

*RefWorks* allows you to...

- ◆ organize and create a personal database online — no more index cards to write out and organize. Everything is done automatically as you import the reference into *RefWorks*
- ◆ format bibliographies and manuscripts in seconds, saving hours of tedious typing and decreasing the number of errors in creating bibliographies. Easily make changes to your paper and reformat instantly according to dozens of style sheets
- ◆ import references from a wide variety of databases, including *Cambridge Scientific Abstracts*, *ScienceDirect*, and *ProQuest*, using their Import Filters
- ◆ search your *RefWorks* database quickly and easily. *RefWorks* automatically creates author, descriptor and periodical indexes when importing, so you just click on the word to perform the retrieval

*RefWorks* is available to Dalhousie users free of charge no matter where you are, as long as you have access to the worldwide web. The product is also platform independent, so PC and Mac users don't have to use different versions. Furthermore, you don't have to worry about upgrades or new versions—updating is automatic and invisible.

*RefWorks* at Dalhousie is sponsored by Academic Computing Services and the University Libraries. For complete information, including instructions on how to get started immediately, go to:

[www.library.dal.ca/libraries/RefWorks.htm](http://www.library.dal.ca/libraries/RefWorks.htm)

### Database search tips

[www.library.dal.ca/databases/guides/problemsolve.htm](http://www.library.dal.ca/databases/guides/problemsolve.htm)

#### Getting too few results—or none at all?

- ◆ truncate your search term
- ◆ use alternate words
- ◆ use keywords rather than exact subjects
- ◆ check your spelling

#### Getting too many results?

- ◆ add more terms to focus your search
- ◆ limit your search terms to a specific field
- ◆ limit your results by publication date

## Jane Duffy Appointed New Associate University Librarian



Photo: MichaelTiefelsdorf, Ohio State University

The Dalhousie University Libraries are very pleased to announce the appointment of Jane Duffy to the position of Associate University Librarian, effective October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2004.

Jane Duffy holds certificates in Marketing and Broadcast Advertising from Ryerson Polytechnical Institute; a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Religious Studies from University of Toronto; a Master of Arts in Religion and Culture from Wilfrid Laurier University, and a Master of Library Science from the University of Toronto Faculty of Information Studies. Jane has held appointments as Information Services Librarian at the Faculty of Information Studies Inforum (University of Toronto), Reference Librarian at St. Michael's College (University of Toronto), Head of St. John's College Library and St. Paul's College Library (University of Manitoba), and Physics/Astronomy Librarian and Head of Access Services at the Science and Engineering Library (The Ohio State University) in Columbus, Ohio.

Jane's professional work has concentrated on the development and delivery of new public services in the age of the digital academic library. She has offered workshops and co-ordinated panels on Digital Reference Services, Library and Information Technology partnerships and Fund-raising for Academic Library professional development. Since 2000, she has collaborated with OhioLINK

and the Graduate School at The Ohio State University to introduce and manage the OSU Electronic Theses and Dissertations project. Jane has published in the areas of scholarly communications, open archives and web-based physical sciences librarianship. In recent years, she has been a reviewer of physical sciences materials for CHOICE. Jane's book project for Scarecrow Press, "Innovation and Change in Academic Libraries," co-authored with Dr. Vicki Williamson, Ballarat University (Australia) is now in its final stages.

Jane is married to Dr. Michael Tiefelsdorf of the Dept. of Geography at the Ohio State University. In her free time, Jane enjoys running and kickboxing.

## Sexton Bids Goodbye to Sharon Murphy

Sharon Murphy, Head, Reference and Research at the Sexton Design & Technology Library, has left Dalhousie and Nova Scotia to launch an exciting new phase in her career. Sharon has accepted the brand new position of "Librarian for Integrated Learning" with the Science and Engineering Library and the Faculty of Applied Science at Queen's University, effective September 1, 2004.

Sharon began working at the Sexton Library in 1997. Everyone who had the good fortune to work with her will miss her unflagging good cheer, her unflappability, and her invaluable professional skills and dedication. Sharon herself "absolutely loved" her time at Dal, and has nothing but praise for Sexton's "incredibly special, service-oriented" environment. Above all, she is "grateful to all the wonderful people" with whom she has had contact both professionally and personally at Dalhousie over the past seven years.

Sharon's colleagues and friends at the Dalhousie University Libraries wish her and her husband, Richard Cumyn, the very best as they begin their new life in Kingston.



## Nova Scotia Theatre Collection Website Launched

[www.library.dal.ca/archives/nstheatre/index.htm](http://www.library.dal.ca/archives/nstheatre/index.htm)

- ◆ Who was the first Artistic Director of Neptune Theatre?
- ◆ Which Irish author, playwright and critic visited Halifax in 1882 to talk about the Decorative Arts at the Academy of Music?
- ◆ What is the oldest continuously running community theatre in Canada?

Everything you ever wanted to know about theatre in Nova Scotia is now at your fingertips, thanks to a lively, informative and colourful new website.

As part of its ongoing work to preserve and make available the documentary heritage of theatre in Nova Scotia, the Dalhousie University Archives has launched a web-based, multi-media resource that showcases elements of the theatre collections in relation to past and present Nova Scotian theatre history. The launch was made official on July 2, 2004.

Theatre in Nova Scotia has its roots in Aboriginal, Acadian, American, British, Canadian, and European traditions, drawing also on regional and community influences. *From Artillery to Zuppa Circus: Recorded Memory of Theatre Life in Nova Scotia* features a mosaic of interview profiles and archival records reflecting the talent of many by showcasing textual, visual, and audio accounts of the past and present history of Nova Scotia's theatre world.

Everything from seasonal outdoor theatre to national and world-wide touring operations is represented on the website, which provides insight into over 125 years of theatrical activity in the province. Drawn from archival collections and sources "beyond the archive" in the living theatre community itself, the project features profiles of various gifted actors, directors, designers and managers.

The Dalhousie Archives gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the Department of Canadian Heritage through the Canadian Culture Online Program, the National Archives of Canada and the Canadian Council of Archives.

## People

### A Work Day in the Life of...



**Joyline Makani**

**Management & Economics Librarian  
Killam Library**

Joyline Makani loves everything she does.

Like most professional librarians in 2004, on any given day Joyline can be observed deftly keeping multiple balls in the air. She is the Library's subject specialist for Business, Management, Economics, and Library and Information Studies (SLIS), and spends time daily on collections and maintaining webpages in these subjects. She answers reference queries at the reference desk and online via *Live Help* and email. Faculty and students in Business/Management, Economics, and Library Studies can book one-on-one appointments with Joyline for in-depth consultation. She is doing research for a publication on how business students collaborate, will be speaking at the 2005 ACRL conference next spring, and is Chair of the local Arrangements Committee for the 2005 APLA conference.

Joyline's first love, however, is teaching. She teaches classes in organizational and management strategy for the School of Library and Information Studies, as well as information literacy skills in the Faculty of Management and the Economics Department. Being a consummate "people person" with tremendous energy, enthusiasm and a great sense of humor, Joyline shines in the classroom as well as in the library.

## Events

◆ **"A CLCP Reunion:  
Celebrate the Spoken Word"  
Killam Library**

**5 - 7 p.m., October 22, 2004**

Special Collections, 5th floor

Call 494-3615 for info

[www.library.dal.ca/spcol/clcpread.htm](http://www.library.dal.ca/spcol/clcpread.htm)

◆ **"Seeing Differently"  
Open House @ the Libraries  
October 22 - 23, 2004**

Learning Commons tour, Kipling Collection viewing, GIS demo, architectural and medical displays and more. Check at each of the Libraries for details.

◆ **Instructional Sessions**

This is just a sample of the instructional sessions offered by the Dal Libraries. Please see our website for a full listing.

**Killam Library**

Online Information Literacy tutorials

[www.library.dal.ca/killam/tutorials.htm](http://www.library.dal.ca/killam/tutorials.htm)

**Kellogg Library**

*Introduction to PubMed* (60 min.)

On demand

*RefWorks* hands-on training sessions:

Oct. 29, 1 - 2 pm, Carleton Lab

Nov. 26, 1 - 2 pm, Carleton Lab

**Sexton Library**

Full suite of Information Literacy instruction

*Contact subject specialists at Sexton*