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Book Review

Digital literacies: Concepts, policies and practices. Vol 30. Colin Lankshear & Michele Knobel (editors). New York: Peter Lang, 2008. 321 p. $33.95. Soft cover. ISBN 978-1-4331-0169-4.

With *Digital literacies* … a group of internationally renowned authors, under the capable editorship of Colin Lankshear & Michele Knobel, succeed in raising awareness for the vast scope and complexities of literacies that need to be considered in a rapidly developing digital environment.

Through the various contributions, the book argues that the diversity that consists amongst the concepts of digital literacy requires adopting an expansive view of digital literacies and their significance. Digital literacy need to be seen and understood as a plural phenomenon comprising many digital literacies that should be explored such as information literacy, computer literacy, media literacy, functional literacy and media competency (covered in part 1 of the book). In addition the strengths and usefulness of a socio-cultural approach and context need to be explored (covered in part 2 of the book). The introduction explains: "This sheer variety means that digital literacy can be seen as a framework for integrating various other literacies and skill sets" without "the need to encompass them all" or to serve as "one literacy to rule them all" … "Equally, however, it reminds us that any attempt to constitute an umbrella definition or overarching frame of digital literacy will necessarily involve reconciling the claims of myriad concepts of digital literacy, a veritable legion of digital literacies" (p. 4). Therefore the title of the book: *Digital literacies: concepts, policies and practices*.

A single read for a review cannot do justice to the thought-provoking contributions. These needs reflection and discussion in the library and information communities, educational communities and any other communities where such "literacies" and their socio-cultural context may feature. The attentive reader will find many applications for *Digital literacies* … in academic contexts, research contexts and day-to-day practice. Implications for the latter especially need to be explored.

Apart from an introductory chapter, *Digital literacies* … offers twelve chapters. In the introductory chapter Lankshear and Knobel reflect on the concepts, policies and practices of digital literacies, thus setting the tone for the first part of the book. Chapter 1 offers an insight-full exploration on the origins and concepts of digital literacy, written by David Bawden. He argues that digital literacy involves "mastering ideas, not keystrokes" (p. 2), and that this should be the basis for distinguishing the array of concepts of digital literacy.

This is followed by chapter 2 in which Genevieve Marie Johnson considers functional Internet literacy, the cognitive skills required, and its implications for instruction. Bloom's taxonomy of skills is also explored. Chapter three by Maggie Fieldhouse and David Nicholas reflects on digital literacy as information savvy, and how this relates to information literacy, as well as how to move to digital wisdom. David Buckingham

discusses defining digital literacy in chapter 4, with special reference to what young people need to know about digital media. Chapter 5 by Leena Rantala and Juha Suoranta deals with digital literacy policies in the European Union (EU). They question whether inclusive partnership is the final stage of governmentality.

Morten Søby considers digital competence and the educational policy and pedagogy in a Norwegian context in chapter 6, while Allan Martin deals with digital literacy and the digital society in Chapter 7. This includes the process of digital literacy.

In the second part of the book (chapters 8 - 12), social practices of remixing, blogging, online trading and social networking as well as legal issues associated with digital media is considered. Here, Ola Erstad in Chapter 8, discusses trajectories of remixing and how this relates to digital literacies, media production and schooling. In Chapter 9 Lillia Efimimova and Johathan Grudin consider what they refer to as "crossing the boundaries" - digital literacies in enterprises including employee blogs, blog infrastructures, and blogs as part of the job. Julian Davies deals with the online shopper in chapter 10, called "*Pay and display …*".

Chapter 11 by Michelle Knobel and Colin Lankshear explores digital literacy and participation in online social networking spaces. In the final chapter, chapter 12, they reflect on legal aspects concerning digital literacy with special reference to remixing elements of Lawrence Lessig's ideal of "Free Culture". They explain remix as follows: "Remix is the idea of someone mixing cultural resources together, and then someone else coming along and remixing the thing the previous person had created, by selecting from it and adding new cultural resources to it, and inserting their own purpose and inflections into it … by remixing, taking what others have created, remixing it and sharing with other people again …" (p. 282). In the last paragraph of *Digital literacies*, … they stress their point: "The moment we begin to address free culture in terms of the right to write as remixers, and in terms of opportunities to make *experience* of cultural creativity through the capacity to mix and manipulate cultural materials from everyday life - whether these be finite artifacts, or whether they be symbols, elements of theories, or designs - is the moment we begin to challenge seriously the prevalent conception of education as content transmission. That will be the moment we begin seriously to de-commodify education and reconstitute learning as an expression of free cultural production in the interests of becoming expert performers within those domains of everyday life that education should probably be concerned about… We personally believe that this moment cannot come too soon".

The well-referenced contributions, substantially embedded in theory and in-depth reflection, call for action in the way we understand, teach and promote digital literacy in a plural context as literacies, and with acknowledgement of its socio-cultural contexts. *Digital literacies: concept, policies and practices* is certainly a must-read publication for academics involved in any form of education, training and the literacies. The book is even more relevant to information scientists and librarians. It is a very readable publication, well-referenced and well-researched - but it requires reflection and discussion in different contexts before we will see differences in practice. I hope that there will be follow-up publications, continuing on the ideas proposed as well as follow-up of how these are adopted in the various practices where digital literacies need to be promoted.

Apart from the audiences mentioned, *Digital literacies…* is also highly recommended to graduate students entering the research arena and exploring possible topics.

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