Promoting Information Literacy through Media Literacy

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Greg Pond

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We the undersigned, certify that we read this thesis and approve it as adequate in scope and quality for the degree Master of Arts.

Thesis or Project Director

Faculty Mentor

Faculty Reader

Gonzaga University
MA Program in Communication and Leadership Studies
Abstract

Mass media messages have overwhelmed modern culture. Many of these messages are not created with the best interest of the recipient in mind (Potter, 2008). The Mass media does not operate as a public service. It’s big business. Good daily decision making has become increasingly dependent on the ability to be “information literate” – to effectively evaluate the accuracy, currency, and completeness of media messages. But these critical information literacy skills are surprisingly lacking today (Asher & Duke, 2012). One recent study suggests that information literacy skills can be effectively developed through training in media literacy (Van De Vord, 2010). This thesis has replicated this study in an effort to validate the correlation between information literacy and media literacy. Aside from the Van De Vord study, the communications theory of Media Ecology, as proposed by McLuhan, and developed by Postman is foundational to this work. Also referenced are McCombs and Shaw’s agenda setting and Noelle-Neumann’s spiral of silence theories. Additionally, the work of Potter in media literacy; of McChesney in media economics; and of Duke & Asher in information literacy are also foundational. Quantitative research for this thesis was conducted using an internet-based survey. The gathered empirical data was used in a statistical correlation analysis between information literacy and media literacy. The test results validated that the two variables were weakly correlated in a positive direction with evidence of statistically significant probability. The weakness of the correlation and the limitations inherent in the testing methods suggest that additional study is needed - perhaps utilizing alternate testing methods. Further comparison between the differing methods that are traditionally used in teaching the two different literacies is also suggested.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Like a drop of red dye in a clear beaker of water, technology changes everything (Postman, 1995). In today’s advanced merchandising culture, modern mass media technologies have drastically altered society (Postman, 1993). On average, people spend over eight hours per day consuming media. Consumers view media messages seeking entertainment, helpful information, and social connections (Potter, 2008). In contrast, the creators of the messages are paid to supply their constructed audiences with content driven largely by advertising. Advertisers use every medium available to send continuous and ubiquitous messages to compete for the limited attention of consumers (McChesney, 1999). In order to gain the fickle attention of their audiences, media messages are often carefully created to appear to be legitimate news, entertainment, and public service stories, but are nonetheless laced with advertising messages striving to communicate information, ideas, and opinions which are beneficial to the advertisers, but are not necessarily reliable, complete, accurate, or in the best interest of the consumer. Media consumers are well served to develop a repertoire of competencies which allow them to analyze and evaluate a wide variety of messages from various sources with an educated skepticism. These “media literacy” skills enable people to gain a much clearer perspective of the border between the real world and the world manufactured by video, audio, and print media (Potter, 2008, p. 9).

Aside from the traditional TV, movies, radio, and print mediums; marketing professionals also utilize the World Wide Web to disseminate their messages to mass audiences (Baber, 2011). Much of the information found on the internet – the source upon which most people rely for their research needs today - suffers from the same challenges in credibility as other forms of media. Of the 45 billion web pages (worldwidewebsize.com) of uncontrolled information available on
the internet, much of the information is contributed anonymously, or with biased motivations, and cannot be verified as current, relevant, complete, or reliable. Students and other on-line researchers today are confronted with the daunting task of discerning between fact and fiction in a labyrinth of information without reliable guidance (Asher & Duke, 2012). The development of a healthy skepticism regarding on-line information is essential when sorting through the overwhelming volumes of available information. Like “media literacy,” this “information literacy,” associated with on-line information, is also a critical skill that must be acquired to enable success in the 21st century media culture. This study examines the promotion of information literacy through media literacy. It is hypothesized that media literacy education will result in increased information literacy skills.

Statement of the Problem

Many young people today are now satisfying much of their need for entertainment, useful information, and human interpersonal communication by glaring at the flashing images of a two dimensional video screen (Potter, 2008). The cultural and societal effects of modern media are profound (Sparks, 2010). Today’s college students are very comfortable logging into class on-line from a place and at a time of their own choosing as opposed to traveling to meet with classmates in a traditional classroom at an appointed time (Schaarsmith, 2013). While in the past, a class research assignment required a visit to the campus library, today's students can, and do, conduct much, if not all, of the necessary research on-line. Having grown up with the Web, many of today’s students, both on-line and on campus, will naturally opt for the relative simplicity and convenience of internet research rather than exert the effort to learn the complexities of a new “traditional” campus library – which, to them, is not at all traditional. But not all information available on-line is accurate (Potter, 2005). As students work within an
information environment that is increasingly open and dynamically changing, research assignments can represent a complex and potentially daunting task. A recent ethnographic study was conducted involving both distance learners and on-campus students at five university campuses. The study found that today’s students possess search habits and information literacy skills which are surprisingly lacking (Asher & Duke, 2010). Specifically deficient were critical thinking skills necessary to evaluate the relevance, currency, reliability, completeness and accuracy of information accessed (Van de Vord, 2010). As a result of their years of successfully searching the Web for their personal information needs, the internet has given rise to a generation of learners that expect instantaneous on-line access to stacks of sources on any conceivable topic (Asher & Duke, 2010, p. 154) without any considerations regarding the origin, motives, or accuracy of the information. College students doing research today are prone to quickly surrender when confronted by minor obstacles and tend to treat all search boxes as a Google-like interface. Further, they lack the ability to refine searches and evaluate sources (Asher & Duke, 2010, p. 162). Of course, the unregulated internet is not limited to scholarly content. Indeed, much of the text, images, audio, and video available online are intended to appear credible even though they originate from anonymous and unreliable sources with uncertain motives (Van De Vord, 2010). And with the Internet becoming the primary research information source - for distance learners by necessity and on campus students by choice - information literacy skills have become all the more vital.

**Importance of the Study**

Students are well served to apply some effort in the development of the skills needed to sort through advertising and propaganda in order to identify content which is relevant, current, reliable, complete, and accurate (Donnelly, 2013) including peer reviewed scholarly content.
The purpose of the current study is to investigate factors that can increase the likelihood for students and others to accurately evaluate on-line information enabling them to make better decisions based on better information. One proposed method is to develop information literacy through a familiarity with critical media literacy. While training in information literacy traditionally consists of instruction in the use of library resources, media literacy education involves a student's analysis of his/her own media use, an identification of the author's purpose and point of view, a knowledge of production techniques, an evaluation of media representation of the world, and an understanding of the economic structure of the media industry (Van De Vord, 2010, p. 172). It is hypothesized that these media literacy skills can be transferable to the development and practice of improved information literacy skills.

**Definition of Terms Used**

This study uses definitions unique to the subject matter and distinct from one another:

*Information Literacy*: To be information literate, a person must be able to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information (American Library Association, 1989).

*Media Literacy*: A series of communication competencies, including the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and communicate information in a variety of forms, including print and non-print messages. It empowers people to be both critical thinkers and creative producers of an increasingly wide range of messages using image, language, and sound. It is the skillful application of literacy skills to media and technology messages (National Association for Media Literacy Education, 2013)
Organization of Remaining Chapters

This thesis is organized into five chapters. The current chapter describes the background and importance for this study comparing the relationship between information literacy and media literacy. Chapter two describes the theoretical and philosophical framing of the study, as well as a review of existing literature addressing cultural effects of modern media and the need for media consumers to possess critical skills. Chapter three describes the scope and methodology used to answer the research question. Chapter four reveals the analyses and discusses the results of the study. Chapter five addresses the limitations of the study and offers discussion and recommendations for further study. References are included. The appendix includes a copy of the survey tool used in the study.
Chapter Two: Review of the Literature

Philosophical Assumptions and Theoretical Basis

The ethical and philosophical assumptions of Martin Buber, Immanuel Kant, and Clifford Christians will be foundational to this study. The unethical practices of Machiavelli from a modern perspective will also provide a basis. Critical communication theory will be considered including Marshall McLuhan’s Media Ecology, Elizabeth Noelle-Neumann’s Spiral of Silence Theory, and Maxwell McComb’s & Donald Shaw’s Agenda-Setting Theory, Stanley Deetz’s Critical Theory of Communication, and Stuart Hall’s Cultural Studies. Additionally, W. James Potter’s work on Media Literacy, Neil Postman’s ideas on cultural media effects, Robert McChesney’s media criticism, and other current research on information literacy and critical media literacy will be employed in this important study.

Ethical Theory

Societal expectations commonly require that individual behavior be compliant with accepted ethical standards. Ethics represent the systematic study of the principles that appraise voluntary human conduct and the reasoning process which will lead to choices that are absent of self-service, are mutually beneficial to all, and thus will maximize humanity (Christians, et. al, 2009, p. xii). Although individual standards of ethics are usually quite high, many consider the ethical conduct of the giant corporations which make up the American mass media to be quite low (McChesney, 2009). Issues such as deception, economic temptation, and sensationalism, for example, are common in reporting, advertising, public relations and entertainment (Christians, 2005, p. x). The double standard presents a perplexing dichotomy.
Martin Buber, a philosopher and theologian, believed people are more human or less human depending on the methods they engender in their interactions with their fellow beings. Buber said that for people to live uprightly with each other, they must put aside concerns for creating a favorable impression (a false impression) or sustaining a cultivated image. Truth comes from the spontaneous transparency of self with others – a focus on the “being.” Whereas warped (destructive) communication puts all its energy into merely “seeming” (Buber, 1958). Interestingly, using the tools of modern electronic communication, the mass media corporations create billion dollar businesses through the use of this same “seeming.” In his ideas in Cultural Studies, Stuart Hall explains that today’s mass media serves to provide people with guiding myths that shape the perception of the world and serve as important instruments of social control (Hall, 1996). Mass media corporations have a way of testing the ethical limits of their new technologies and seem to proclaim immunity from the common ethical expectations which have historically guided individual behavior (McChesney, 2008).

Another ethical theologian that explained the common ethical basis for human society was Immanuel Kant. Kant believed there are truths superior to mankind’s limited ability to reason which transcend the physical universe. He also believed that conscience is inborn in every person and that it must be obeyed as a universal law (Kant, 1964). He taught that the “Categorical Imperatives,” inherent in human beings, are determined, not by reason, but through the common conscience shared by all humanity. Kant believed that it is through the human conscience that moral law is embedded in the texture of human nature (Christians, et. al, 2009, p. 15).
Although ethical theorists like Buber and Kant provide important ideals for human behavior, a common ethical thread throughout humanity has been demonstrated to be unrealistic. Relations in the real world, particularly regarding information communicated via the mass media, often fall far short of these utopian models. Many individuals, as well as organizations, fail to give any consideration to the examples of Buber and Kant in pursuit of highly ethical and benevolent decision making.

Rather than exercising selfless consideration in their daily routines, many are focused on purely self interested goals showing a complete disregard for Buber’s concern for the “being.” This kind of self serving behavior is not new within humanity. In the early 1500’s, Niccolo Machiavelli was a notorious Italian statesman who developed, and documented, a systematic method to retain political and personal power through a careful and methodical strategy of self serving treachery, deceit, and even murder (Bopst & Galie, 2006). He was among the first to document an entirely unethical - “the end justifies the means” philosophy. Unfortunately, Machiavelli’s teachings have never gone out of fashion (Galie & Bopst, 2006). Influence, control, and power remain a central aspect of modern corporate and political life. Much of today’s public and corporate domain is unconcerned with the principles of ethical communication theory. In the field of mass communication in particular, with today’s powerful technological tools, there is very often a focus on merely “seeming,” and consequently a growing chasm between ethical theory and practice. In carrying out its functions of reporting, persuading, representing, and entertaining; the mass media corporations sometimes circulate disinformation which is intentionally manipulative in the interest of their own gain (Potter, 2008).
Modern Communication Theory

In today’s advanced market economy, mass communication technologies have fundamentally changed the way human dialogue occurs. Much of human interaction today is accomplished via the powerful tools of new media technology - unimagined by previous generations. The flashing images and blaring sound of today’s communication technologies have the unprecedented ability to attract and hold attention; and to deliver messages 24/7 to a ready audience (Massey, 2005). This is particularly true among the younger generation of “digital natives.” The rising generation, having grown up with technology, can’t imagine a world without it. Younger people tend to view modern technology as “mythical” (Barthes, 1995) - part of their natural world – and are more likely to perceive the medium and the messages as natural and unchangeable. “The new media technology works us over completely” (McLuhan, 1967, p. 26). Studies show that young people in America spend in excess of 8 hours each day on average consuming media (Potter, 2008, p. 5). This is the equivalent of what was an average workday for their grandparents (Massey, 2005). And with the ability to broadcast tailored messages to millions of people simultaneously, the potential influence that today’s mass media system can have upon society is staggering (Postman, 1985). There are more television sets in America than there are people (Potter, 2005, p. 5). The average American, by age 40, has seen a million television commercials (Massey, 1999, p. 37). A recent comprehensive study of media concluded that almost 70% of the average person’s day includes some form of media use including television, radio, print, computers, smart phones, and game consoles. In contrast, less than 21% of the average person’s time is devoted to work (Potter, 2005, pg. 5). Constantly changing technology continues to introduce consumers to new ways to access growing amounts of information. Today these messages are so numerous and so constant, that there is no way to
consciously pay attention to them all and there is no indication of any forthcoming respite (Potter, 2005, p. 6). The mass media has completely overwhelmed modern culture.

One communication theory which has repeatedly exposed the framing power of the media is “the agenda setting theory.” This theory describes how media messages have been shown to set the agenda for public discussion, to tell people what to think about, and how to think about it (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). Another is “The spiral of silence theory” which describes how media messages have also been repeatedly shown to have the ability to convince people that their opinions are atypical – even when they are not - and influence them to keep their honest opinions to themselves and remain silent (Noelle-Neumann, 1993). Indeed, the messages of the mass media have the ability to control what people say, do not say, and think.

In considering what the creators of the media messages are trying to accomplish with their immense framing power, it is also important to remember that the mass media today is not a public service; it is big business – usually motivated by profit. Today’s mass media has changed everything (Postman, 1998, p. 7) - including the way some look at ethical responsibility when conversing with others (Christians, 2009). The creators of the media messages are not concerned with the fact that the messages they broadcast have reduced important social discourse to a form of entertainment. As long as their messages result in a healthy profit, the media corporations are not concerned about other far-reaching and irreversible societal effects (Postman, 1998).
Unrestrained Power of the Media

The technological advances in electronic communication have provided broadcast media corporations with access to millions of consumers continuously. The power of the media is “primordial.” This sweeping social and political power is unrestrained by any law. This is a power that, in the past, has been reserved exclusively for the likes of Lords and Kings (White, 1973, p. 245).

Another blow to the diversity of information presented to the public in the media occurred with the passage of “the telecommunications act of 1996.” The sweeping law lifted the previous restrictions on media outlet ownership. Consequently, much of the information available today through the “public” airwaves is controlled by just six (6) (Sanders, 2012) enormous and very powerful corporations that use cross channel strategies to broadcast their repeated themes (McChesney, 1999). A consumer who awakens in the morning and turns on the Today Show, reads Fortune Magazine over breakfast, drives to work with the radio on, reads Sports Illustrated over lunch, Watches an HBO movie after dinner, and watches CNN news before bed, has seen and heard the messages and framing six times in six different mediums from the same enormous media conglomerate – Time Warner. Since 1996, hundreds of mergers have reduced the number of media owners dramatically. Today, these few (6) mega corporations control 95% of the media messages the public sees. This dramatically reduces the diversity of opinions presented and grants these few corporations with far greater power to choose their own framing for the messages they present across multiple channels (McChesney, 1999).

Another description of the overwhelming power wielded by media is described by Stuart Hall. Hall sets forth the position that mass media manufacture consent for dominant ideologies
and encourage the status quo by convincing readers and viewers that they share the same interests as those who hold the reins of power. In this way, rather than using its power as a force for positive change, mass media corporations continue to establish the meanings that shape society as a form of hegemony, continuing to reinforce the worldview that is imposed and accepted as the cultural norm (Hall, 1989).

Also, in his Critical Theory of Communication in Organizations, Stanley Deetz describes how multinational corporations can become the overwhelmingly dominant force in society; more powerful than the Church, State, or family in their ability to influence the lives of individuals. Deetz describes “corporate colonization,” the encroachment of modern corporations into every area of life outside the workplace (Deetz, 1992). These ideas accurately describe the influence of today’s mass media corporations. Whether these overwhelming influences are beneficial or desirable to the media consumer is of no concern to the creators of the messages. The media corporations are not generous societal benefactors. They are simply running a business. And today’s business is increasingly conducted on-line.

The internet cannot be considered as a free space unaffected by the corporate influences of the mass media. Websites can be created by an individual, a business, or other organization. Any website can contain a hyperlink to any other website, so the distinction between individual sites, as perceived by the user, can be blurred. Not surprisingly, corporate interests have flocked to the new information source in search of new opportunities of mass consumption (Berners-Lee, 1999). The internet today is nearly as replete with advertising messages as the rest of major broadcast media (Cailiau, 2007).
Advertising Dominates Content

A large percentage of the information available is “warped,” (Buber, 1958) created and presented by major media corporations in pursuit of their own motives (Potter, 2008). The mass media gatekeepers create their messages with the objective of persuading an audience about an idea, thought, or product in the hope of eliciting a response. While the consumer is seeking entertainment, social connections, and helpful information to satisfy needs and interests; the goal of the media programmers is to use these various needs and interests to try to convince people to be less satisfied with their lives as the sponsors offer to “help” them solve problems they don’t even have and to move them toward goals which are not necessarily in their best interests (Potter, 2008, p. 9). In spite of what most of the information “seems” to be, it is important to remember that advertising is often the primary driver of content (Caywood, 2012, p. 254). Media programmers seek to “construct” audiences and then rent them out to advertisers at a profit (Potter, 2005, p.43). The information prepared by the mass media programmers should not always be considered as objective and useful information.

The Internet is No Exception

With corporate owners controlling and profiting from the vast majority of mass media, it is not surprising that the advent of the internet, to them, simply gave rise to a host of new marketing opportunities and a race to take advantage of the new e-commerce markets (Berners-Lee, 1999).

Most students today are familiar with the popular search engine “Google” which currently consists of approximately 45 billion web pages (worldwidewebsize.com). Although academic sources work hard to make available information that is reliable, accurate, and even
peer-reviewed; their information is often lost in a deluge of competing messages presented in a variety of attention grabbing formats (Asher & Duke, 2010). Students performing on-line research are confronted with a complete immersion of information as mass media programmers continuously seek audience members for their advertisers. Sifting through piles of data in search of information which is accurate, complete, current, and reliable presents a daunting task for today’s researcher.

**The Literature**

Once again, according to the American Library Association (ALA), “To be information literate, a person must be able to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and effectively use the needed information” (ALA, 1989). Current research has found that there are obstacles to information literacy that can be overcome (Asher & Duke, 2010). It is critical that today’s on-line learners develop the skills necessary to recognize the propaganda, bias, and advertising which dominate many information sources (Van De Vord, 2010).

“If it wasn’t true, they couldn’t print it. Right? ... Wrong.”

There is very little in the way of information verification which monitors the accuracy of the information presented (McChesney, 2008). The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is charged with assuring that all public media is in the best interest of the public. The FCC website describes that the function of the agency is to promoting competition, innovation, and investment …and support the nation’s economy” (fcc.org). However, no mention is made of monitoring information for accuracy. In the United States (U.S.), there is no Orwellian “Ministry of Truth.” In fact, quite the opposite exists. The FCC mainly functions to dole out
monopoly licensing rights to corporations for the use of the “public airwaves.” The U.S. constitution guarantees the right of a free press (Madison, et al., 1783). Of course, the mass media today is much more than just a “press.” Today’s oversight of the use of the public airwaves has led to a media saturated, technologically dependent, and globally connected world with a continuous stream of uncontrolled information. Past court cases regarding the media’s culpability when broadcasting misinformation have repeatedly sided with the media’s constitutional right to free speech, even when guilty of publishing false information [New York Times Co. v. Sullivan, (1964)].

Is the public being served, or the corporations? Do self-serving, and profit-driven media corporations have an unaccountable “carte blanche” to immerse the public airways with absolutely anything regardless of its accuracy or effects? Is the constitutional guarantee of a “free press” today correctly interpreted as a mass media with full authority and immunity? As strange as these questions sound, in past legal disputes involving injuries caused by the media’s dissemination of misinformation, American courts have consistently sided with the media. Citing concerns over censorship, the courts have repeatedly interpreted the constitutional guarantee of free speech to belong to the media, not the public. Moreover, laws requiring the mass media to “operate in the public interest” have never been enforced (Communications act of 1934) (Gerbner, 2002). In today’s technologically wired world, it seems that all responsibility rests squarely upon the shoulders of the media consumer and information seeker.

45 billion web pages - Just Google it.

In competition with 45 billion attention grabbing web pages, it is not surprising that many student researchers today are having difficulty locating and identifying needed information (Asher & Duke, 2010). But even more troublesome is convincing the learners themselves of
their own need to become information literate. The tech savvy students of today have grown up enveloped with video screens, Smart phones, and the Internet (Massey, 2009). They consider themselves to be technologically sophisticated in their use of the “mythical” technology surrounding them (Barthes, 1995). This technical confidence has apparently created some new problems for today’s students.

A recent study of college students found their information search habits and information literacy skills to be significantly deficient (Asher & Duke, 2010, p. 162). It was demonstrated that students today have a tendency to treat everything like a Google interface. When obstacles were encountered in an on-line search, students were generally very quick to abandon the source in question and begin a search for different items altogether or simply reverting to Google (Asher & Duke, 2010, p.154). The research showed that students do not adequately understand how information resources are organized, both in the library and on the Internet. In an effort to complete a research assignment, one student explained that he didn’t know what research tools were available. He said he knew there were books, but didn’t know how to find them. “The only thing I really know how to do is go to Google and type in what I’m looking for,” he said (Asher & Duke, 2010, p. 157). Inexperienced researchers often inadvertently seek out information which confirms their own existing biases (confirmation bias) (Jones & Sugden, 2001) or will unintentionally seek out preferred conclusions and ignore non-preferred information (motivated skepticism) (Lopez, 1992). With a limited amount of time to complete an assignment, students may approach a research project with a preconceived idea of what information they are seeking. When they locate it, they are able to proceed with the completion of the assignment. In the hurried pace of today’s crowded obligations, the source of the information, or its accuracy and credibility, are not the immediate concern.
Information Literacy from Media Literacy

Information literacy is accomplished basically by teaching individuals to think critically about an information source. Becoming literate about the ubiquitous mass media involves many of the same critical skills. Once again, media literacy consists of a series of communication competencies, including the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and communicate information in a variety of forms, including print and non-print messages. Media literacy empowers people to be both critical thinkers and creative producers of an increasingly wide range of messages using image, language, and sound. It is the skillful application of literacy skills to media and technology messages (NAMLE, 2013).

It is important for media consumers to develop a habit of examining the various codes that the messages are attempting to program in their minds. As the media outlets make extreme efforts competing to grab and hold the attention of the audience, it becomes incumbent upon the consumers themselves to develop a system to constructively allocate their own limited attention and to use critical discretion with the information they are given. Coincident to the goal of economic gain of the corporate media, as a mere side affect, their new technologies are transforming the culture into something completely unfamiliar (McLuhan, 1967). “Media corporations do not much care what traditions are overthrown in the process or whether or not a culture is prepared to function without such traditions” (Postman, 1998, p. 8).
Rationale

Becoming Critical

Critical media literacy goes beyond the notion of information literacy. Media literacy includes critically viewing mass communication and pop culture. Since today’s public is already spending a large amount of time consuming media (Potter, 2008), these are areas in which many are familiar and comfortable. As such, media literacy has a greater potential to allow people to critically analyze relationships between media and audiences; information and power (Keller & Share, 2007). As opposed to general information literacy, students generally find education in media literacy to be immediately relevant and personal (Kellner & Share, 2007). Media literacy involves students’ analysis of their own media use, identification of the author's purpose and point of view, knowledge of production techniques, evaluation of media representation of the world, and understanding of the economic structure of the media industry (Van De Vord, 2010, p. 172). In previous studies, students who were exposed to media literacy programs displayed better critical thinking skills in their ability to identify omitted information and were more likely to be aware of the blurring of information, entertainment, and economics present in nonfiction media messages, thus suggesting that media literacy can be an effective tool in enhancing information literacy (Van De Vord, 2010, p. 174). It is possible that critical thinking skills developed in media literacy can be immediately transferable to information literacy skills – even if the students themselves don’t immediately see their own need to acquire the latter skills.

The current study proposes that learning to think critically about media, including on-line media, will promote transferable skills to a more literate approach to on-line information. Media literacy is more personal and applicable to the experience and lifestyle of today’s average
student. It presents a low resistance opening for cultivating skills in analyzing media codes and conventions. It develops transferable abilities to criticize stereotypes, dominant values, ideologies, and competencies to interpret the multiple meanings and messages generated by media texts (Keller & Share, 2007, p. 4). Media literacy can help students to discriminate and evaluate media content, to critically dissect media forms, to investigate media effects and uses, to use media intelligently, and to construct alternative media (Kellner & Share, 2007, p. 4). This study will be conducted with survey research to a group of adult respondents to investigate the value of building information literacy skills through critical media literacy expertise.

**The Research Question:**

Will increased media literacy skills translate to improved on-line information literacy skills?

**Conclusions:**

The emergence of the information age has resulted in an increasingly fragmented information base and in increasing complexities associated with obtaining specific information for personal and business needs. Despite the ubiquity of media culture in contemporary society and despite the criticism of the distorted ideals, values, and representations of the world in popular culture, media literacy education in the United States has never been adequately established and developed. (Kellner & Share, 2007, p. 4) Evidently, when it comes to filtering the credible from the incredible within the mass media, the burden falls wholly upon the shoulders of the viewer. Both on-line and on campus college students today are opting to do academic research on-line. Accompanying this preference is a disappointing lack of information literacy skills. Today’s students do not adequately understand how information resources are organized and they lack the patience and desire to locate and utilize information which is
relevant, current, reliable, complete, and accurate. Taking advantage of the student’s familiarity with the media culture in which they are most often “natives,” and utilizing the student’s belief that the field is current and personally relevant, critical media literacy is often a topic which today’s students can readily absorb. Fostering information literacy by teaching individuals to think critically about other information sources, i.e. media, is an idea consistent with current critical thinking literature (Van De Vord, 2010). Information literate people are those who have learned how to learn because they know how knowledge is organized, how to find information, and how to use information for their own benefit (ALA, 1989, p. 1). The current study proposes that learning to think critically about media, including on-line media, will promote transferable skills to a more literate approach to on-line information.
Chapter 3: Scope and Methodology

Scope of the Study

The foundational question prompting this study was, “will increased media skepticism (media literacy) translate to improved on-line information literacy skills (information literacy)?” Traditional information literacy education is largely limited to training in the use of library resources. Surprisingly, it all but ignores the ease and popularity of the internet as an alternative information source. Especially to younger information seekers, recommending the library over the internet is like extolling the virtues of the horse in lieu of the automobile. Media literacy education, on the other hand, involves increasing an individual’s self-efficacy with media by increasing their confidence and ability to use media for their own gain rather than the other way around. The scope of the study was based around the hypothesis that the practical and critical skills associated with media literacy could translate to improved self-efficacy for on-line information generally, including an improved aptitude for information literacy. The study followed a quantitative research design, translating the relationship between critical media literacy education and information literacy skills into an empirical representation.

Methodology of the Study

This study employs quantitative survey research to answer the research question. Surveys are an appropriate research method for research questions about self reported beliefs or behaviors (Neuman, 2006, p.273). The survey instrument was constructed with a simple format using clear and concise directions and carefully worded items (Hazel, 2013). In an effort to establish trust, the survey directions includes a brief expression of appreciation for participation in the survey. To avoid response fatigue in the respondents, the targeted survey length was brief
- approximately five minutes. The survey was conducted electronically, utilizing existing applied statistically based sampling techniques available through “SurveyMonkey,” an on-line survey tool. The respondent’s identity was kept anonymous to the researcher, and survey was limited to closed end questions with ordered responses. The research conformed to Gonzaga University’s Institutional Research Board Policy (IRB).

**Participants**

The population was composed of adult men and women 18 and over, randomly selected from a large pool of on-line respondents available through the SurveyMonkey service. With the expectation of an approximate 20% response rate, the survey was broadcasted to a relatively large random sample. Prior to the start of the survey, recipients were notified that their participation was voluntary, anonymous, and greatly appreciated.

**Ethical Considerations**

A major ethical consideration in social research is that respondents have a right to privacy. It is the respondents themselves that decide when and to whom they will provide their personal information. They are more likely to provide such information when it is asked for in a comfortable context with mutual trust, when they believe serious answers are needed, and that their confidentiality will be protected (Neuman, 2006, p. 313). It is acknowledged in the survey that the respondent’s participation is voluntary. The researcher has attempted to construct a survey that contains well developed questions presented in a sensitive way and treats the respondents respectfully.

It is recognized that the potential exists for “junk” research to mislead others. Charlatan researchers sometimes use a “pseudosurvey” to intentionally seek a predetermined result or to
confirm a preexisting bias (Jones, 2001). Effort has been employed to assure that the results of
this study have not been “rigged,” or used to mislead, or manipulate in any way. This survey has
been conducted as legitimate social research in pursuit of new knowledge. Social research must
be performed with accuracy, honesty, respect, and precision. It must include adequate
consideration of ethical obligations for both participants and the researcher’s discipline (Rubin et
al., 2005).

**Procedure and Measures**

In this study, the survey was constructed with the perspectives of diverse respondents in
mind. Effort was made to establish a comfortable setting. The time and generosity of the
respondent was respected. Clear and concise instructions were provided. The survey questions
were constructed to provide valid and reliable measures as well as to help respondents of
differing backgrounds to feel that they understand the questions and that their answers were
meaningful. In order to avoid confusion, the wording of the individual items was designed to be
clear and unambiguous and within the respondent’s capabilities.

In the study, the research question was foundational to the survey items. The overarching
objective of the study was to begin with the construct - media literacy can foster information
literacy - and develop a measurement procedure to observe the idea empirically (Neuman, 2006,
p. 181).

The survey used in the study was adopted from Van de Vord’s (2010) study on distance
students and on-line research. As with the previous study, media literacy was selected as the
independent variable. The survey attempted to assess the media literacy skill level of the
respondents by operationalizing it into three measurable constructs (Neuman, 2006, p. 184);
“awareness of media effects,” “skepticism for advertising,” and self-efficacy for information
seeking.” The survey used a response scale consisting of 5-7 items per section on a 7 point Likert-type scale from strongly disagree, or not at all truthful (1), to strongly agree, or extremely truthful (7). The awareness of media effects section included questions like; “advertisers provide the primary financing for all media productions,” and “media depictions influence an individual’s perception of reality.” The skepticism for advertising section included questions like; “I believe advertising is informative,” and “advertising information is generally truthful.” The self-efficacy of information seeking section included questions like; “I am certain that I can find information on-line that I trust,” and “I am certain that I can avoid information on-line that is inaccurate.” The study used a fourth section to measure information literacy itself as a dependent variable, also on a 7 point Likert-type response scale. The conceptualization of information literacy section included evaluation of relevancy, currency, reliability, and completeness of information. Items included; “whether the author of the information was identifiable” and “clarity of the author’s goals for posting the information on-line.” Respondents were asked to “please indicate the extent to which you actively considered the importance of each of the following in evaluating the quality of information on a Web site.” The empirical data acquired effectively operationalized the constructs of the variables sought.

Before the broadcast of the survey, a pilot test was conducted to several test respondents uncovering weaknesses due to incorrect interpretation, the appearance of bias, or lack of clarity. Valuable feedback was obtained which fostered important clarifications which enhanced the effectiveness of the survey and ultimately the accuracy of the data.

The online survey was administered using SurveyMonkey.com, a web-based service that helps to distribute and analyze online surveys. This company was selected because it has been
recommended to be a user friendly and reliable service employed by Gonzaga University (Hazel, 2012) as well as many other businesses and professional organizations. When it was determined that the survey was clear, comfortable, well constructed, pilot tested, and would provide accurate information; the survey was released to the population.

**Approach to Analysis**

The quantitative data have been collected, organized, and tabulated. Utilizing several powerful analysis tools available from SurveyMonkey, the quantitative data collected in the study was organized into several graphical reports offering important insights into the relationship between media literacy and information literacy, the two variables. Additionally, the data was used in a statistical correlation analysis giving important insight into the correlation and probability relationships between the two variables. The objective was to collate and analyze the gathered data in order to present it in a form that will answer the research question and give theoretical meaning to the results (Neuman, 2006).

**Validity and Reliability**

The benefit provided by any social research is dependent upon valid and reliable measurements. With any research, measurements and analysis need to be both valid and reliable.

Validity refers to how well the conceptual definition (the construct) and operational definition (the empirical data) mesh with each other. This construct is an abstract idea while the indicators being measured in the study are concrete observations. In this study, the measurement validity refers to how well the construct (the abstract notion that improved media literacy promotes information literacy) matches up with the concrete observations (the empirical data gathered from the survey). Validity is part of a dynamic process that grows by
accumulating evidence over time, and without it, all measurement becomes meaningless (Neuman, 2006, p. 192). If valid, the measure should also relate to similar measures and should predict future behavior (Rubin et al., 2005). Every effort has been made to assure the validity of this study.

Generally speaking, “reliability” in this study signifies that its results are dependable and consistent. It suggests that the same result will re-occur under the same conditions. Attention has been given to assure that this study was both valid and reliable.

The following chapter provides further analysis of the collected data, interpreting the information relative to the research question. It also discusses the findings in relation to previous studies as well as the previously discussed theories that are the basis for this thesis.
Chapter 4: The Study

Description

This study was designed to investigate the relationship between individual media literacy and general information literacy skills. Its purpose was to empirically measure the two different skill sets seeking information concerning the transferability of improvement in one skill to the other. Media literacy is encouraged by developing an understanding of personal media use, identification of the author's purpose and point of view, knowledge of production techniques, evaluation of media representation of the world, and understanding of the economic structure of the media industry. These skills have immediate relevance given today’s ubiquitous media culture. Information literacy, on the other hand, is traditionally taught with training in the use of library resources, the value of which is often more difficult to perceive. While traditional education has taken a very different approach to teaching the two skills, previous research indicates that increased criticism in media literacy can translate to improved information literacy as well (Van De Vord, 2010). This study sought to replicate these measures.

The Research Question was written narrowly in order to focus on measurable skills. The survey research incorporated questions to measure information literacy – the dependent variable. Media literacy, the independent variable, was also measured. This variable was divided into three concepts – awareness of media effects, skepticism for advertising, and self efficacy of information seeking. Additional demographic questions were incorporated for use in gathering accurate measures from the study.
Survey results support prior research that indicates individual knowledge of media effects, and skepticism for advertising did positively and significantly relate to information literacy.

**Data**

The online survey, titled “5 Minute Media Use Survey,” (Appendix) was conducted during mid April, 2013. The survey consisted of 17 questions in two formats, with 5 additional questions regarding the demographic make-up of the respondent.

The sample consisted of 103 respondents randomly contacted through an on-line survey. Assuming a 20% response rate, the survey was delivered to approximately 500 targets.

The survey was conducted using SurveyMonkey, an online research company that distributed the survey nationally to a random audience. The population was adults, age 18 and over, in compliance with IRB requirements. Demographic information gathered included age, gender, origin of US citizenship, self-identified ethnicity, and level of education. Questions to discover regional breakdowns and income levels were also added by the SurveyMonkey service.

The gender respondents were 55% male and 45% female. 62% of respondents identified their ethnicity to be European-American. 17% identified themselves as “Other,” 10% as African-American, 9% as Hispanic-American, and 2% as Far-East-American. Middle-Eastern Americans were not identified as respondents in the study. The age of the respondents was fairly evenly distributed with the heaviest concentration of 35% being between 55-64 years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Education</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than High School degree</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school diploma</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelors Degree</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Degree</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1: Education level of all participants.

The respondents in the study were generally well educated (See Table 1). 68% of the respondents in the study reported to have completed a bachelors degree or higher. The U.S. Census Bureau reports the nationwide percentage of the population to have obtained a bachelor’s degree or higher to be 24% making the respondent pool well over twice as well educated when compared to the general public.

The fact that the survey was conducted via the internet has the disadvantage of unequal access. Less-educated, lower income individuals are less likely to have access to the survey which presents a sampling problem as compared to the overall population. Electronic access is one factor that weighted the sample of respondents to be more educated than the general population.

Participants were asked to respond to questions that measured their attitude/aptitude toward media literacy (advertising, media effects, and self-efficacy for information seeking), and information literacy (largely focused on aptitude around source authorship). Participants were also questioned if they were asked whether they sought information seeking to confirm existing bias. All questions were quantitative and were presented in a non-randomized fashion. Questions that required a numeric response were given specific ranges. Most of the questions that required a favorability or likelihood response used a 7-point Likert-type scale. Midway through the survey, question #8 asked respondents to rank 5 options from most important to least important. The survey was introduced with a brief explanation, an assurance of anonymity, an estimate of time commitment, and an expression of gratitude.
Quality of Data

A thorough review of the completed surveys revealed a need to scrub the data due to data quality concerns. As the completed surveys were carefully analyzed, there were indications that a good portion of the respondents failed to take the survey seriously enough to provide useful data. For example, several surveys were noted to have been completed entirely with option 4 only (neither agree nor disagree). Additionally, the SurveyMonkey service included statistics on the respondent’s time spent completing the survey. Many of the surveys were completed in 1.5 minutes or less. This correlates to the respondents spending 3.9 seconds or less per item – barely enough time to read the question – let alone to give the item serious consideration and an honest response. Several of the variables used redundancy in the questions to assure valid data. For example, in assessing information literacy, questions included both, “When searching on-line, I always consider the author of the information,” and “When searching on-line, I honestly do not pay attention to the author of the information.” If a respondent “strongly agreed” to both of these opposing questions, the survey was not considered valid. These problems and others caused much of the data to be invalidated and excluded from the statistical analysis. The method used by the SurveyMonkey service to enlist the participation of respondents is unknown. Nevertheless, an apparent disadvantage to the use of the service seems to be a high percentage of respondents that do not take the survey seriously. After a thorough scrubbing of the data, 57 of the original 103 surveys (55%) were deemed to consist of good quality data useful for the study.

Results of the Study

The data was analyzed to explore the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Media literacy was the independent variable. Media literacy was split into three measurable constructs: 1) skepticism for advertising (skepticism), 2) awareness of media
effects (awareness), and 3) self-efficacy for information seeking (self-efficacy). The three constructs of media literacy were compared against the dependent variable (information literacy).

**Skepticism Toward Advertising**

To evaluate the level of media literacy of the respondents, the survey successfully identified the level of skepticism toward advertising. Question #3, for example, made the statement: “I feel I’ve been accurately informed after viewing most advertisements.” The responses were fairly evenly split with 37.5% indicating a level of agreement, 48.1% in disagreement, and 14.4% neither agreeing nor disagreeing.

![Figure 1: Question #3 was intended to empirically measure a respondent’s level of skepticism toward advertising – a part of media literacy.](image)

**Awareness of Media Effects**

To measure the respondent’s awareness of media effects, the survey posed several questions around media trust. Question #7, for example, stated: "Media depictions influence an
individual’s perception of reality.” 66.20% of the respondents expressed agreement with the statement while 21.12% expressed non-agreement.

![Bar chart showing responses to: "Media depictions influence an individual's perception of reality."]

Figure 2: Question #7 was intended to empirically measure a respondent’s level of awareness of media effects – a part of media literacy.

**Self-Efficacy with Information Seeking**

The self efficacy of the sample was measured by collecting data in response to questions such as, question #12, “I am certain that I can avoid on-line information that is inaccurate.” 60.9% expressed a confident agreement with the statement, and 29.04% expressed a cautious non-agreement with the statement.
Information Literacy

The dependent variable, information literacy, was measured multiple times with the survey. Midway through the survey, question #8 asked respondents to rank what they look for in a web site. Included in the choices was the option, “web sites that are published by identifiable and qualified authorship.” Only 21.90% of the respondents identified an identifiable and qualified author to be the factor most sought (See figure 2). The same number of respondents indicated they primarily seek “a professional looking and well organized web site” when searching on line. 44.1% of the respondents ranked identifiable and qualified authorship in their bottom two choices.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional looking and well organized web sites.</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Average Ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21.90%</td>
<td>34.29%</td>
<td>19.05%</td>
<td>16.19%</td>
<td>8.57%</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>3.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web sites that rank high on search engines like google, yahoo, etc.</td>
<td>26.67%</td>
<td>16.19%</td>
<td>20.95%</td>
<td>22.86%</td>
<td>13.33%</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>3.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web sites with clear and quickly accessible information.</td>
<td>24.04%</td>
<td>32.69%</td>
<td>26.92%</td>
<td>13.46%</td>
<td>2.88%</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>3.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web sites published by identifiable and qualified authorship.</td>
<td>21.90%</td>
<td>14.29%</td>
<td>20.95%</td>
<td>32.38%</td>
<td>10.48%</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>3.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web site that share my perspectives on the world.</td>
<td>5.71%</td>
<td>2.86%</td>
<td>12.38%</td>
<td>15.24%</td>
<td>63.81%</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>1.71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2: Question 8 – A measure of information literacy.

Information literacy was measured several more times including question # 15, “When searching on-line, I honestly don’t pay attention to the author of the information.” 35.3% of respondents failed to disagree with this question.

**Answering the Research Question – The Statistical Analysis**

Once again, this study sought to answer the research question: Will increased knowledge of media literacy translate to improved on-line information literacy skills?

Using statistical correlation analysis, the strength and relationship of each of the three independent variables (skepticism, awareness, and self-efficacy) was compared to the dependent variable (information literacy). In each of the three comparison the correlation analysis of the complied data showed the two variables were weakly correlated in a positive direction with
The results of the data were as follows:

The analysis between skepticism and information literacy showed:  \( r(55)=.275, p=.037 \).

The analysis between awareness and information literacy showed:  \( r(55)=.264, p=.047 \).

The analysis between self-efficacy and information literacy showed:  \( r(55)=.227, p=.089 \).
Figure 4: Excel spreadsheet used to calculate the correlation analysis between the three independent variables and the dependent variable.

Discussion

As mentioned in chapter 2 of this study, using powerful technological tools, today’s mass media has been repeatedly shown to have the capability to set the agenda for public discourse (McCombes & Shaw, 1972), and to guide the thinking of that discourse for its audience (Noelle-Neumann, 1974). The gatekeepers of the media messages use this power in pursuit of their own motives (Potter, 2008), selling the right to drive content to advertisers (Caywood, 2012, p. 254), and allowing the mass communication they administer to become “warped” (Buber, 1958), all but ignoring any conscience driven pursuit of truth (Kant, 1964), but instead pushing the limits of cultural tradition (McChesney, 2008). The good news is that these facts were not completely lost on the respondents of this study. Indeed, a healthy skepticism was identified in nearly half of the sample. 48% of the respondents in the study indicated distrust in advertising. And although the creators of the media messages work very hard to convince viewers otherwise, the study also indicates a high percentage (76%) of respondents were cognizant of the powerful effects of media on individual thinking and on society. Given the massive and growing influences of media, and the lack of any reasonable controls or oversight, it seems that the development of individual skills in media and information literacies are the only shield that society has in the face of cultural disarray (Postman, 1995).

In general, this study has validated what previous studies have stated. In this study all the variables tested confirmed the previous findings, with the exception of the statistical probability of the relationship between self-efficacy and information literacy which was found to be not
statistically significant. Nevertheless, all the other comparisons were found to be statistically significant. The awareness of media effects, a healthy skepticism for advertising, and on-line self-efficacy all seem to offer skills transferable to on-line information literacy. Media literacy skills seem to mold training in a thought process which is beneficial to other areas. The training which currently goes into media literacy skills, such as understanding the economics of the media industries, awareness of authorship and point of view, and to evaluate, construct, and deconstruct media messages etc., as described earlier in this chapter, will contribute positively to the development of an information literate populace.

The promotion of information literacy should not be limited to training related to the use of library databases. Information literacy can be impacted with the use of other 21st century tools which are engaging, relevant, and available in vast quantities such as movies, news reports, and You-tube videos, etc. Requiring viewers to understand who produces the messages, and why, and exploring potential bias, while not traditional information literacy concepts, should, according to the findings of this study, enhance information literacy.

As with any research, the result of this study has certain conclusions that could have application in other areas of examination. This study also has certain limitations due to its focus, structure and other factors. These conclusions and limitations will be discussed in the following chapter.
Chapter 5: Summaries and Conclusions

Differing methods of social research are subject to relative strengths and weaknesses that are inherent in both their design and execution. Social research always presents opportunities to the researcher as well as the respondent to be biased, dishonest, unethical, or simply lacking an adequate concern for the integrity of the study. This study is no exception. As with all survey research, in this study the researcher has been reliant upon the integrity of each respondent to provide thoughtful, accurate, and honest data. However, there is no guarantee that this has been the case simply because a respondent has taken the time to complete the survey. As expressed in the previous chapter, 45% of the data was excluded due to quality concerns.

Limitations of the Study

There was some indication in the data that there may be differences between the self-reported behaviors and the actual behaviors of the respondents due to over-confidence or other factors. For example, many respondents agreed with the statement, “Media depictions influence an individual’s perception of reality.” And these same respondents strongly disagreed with the statement, “My behavior can be influenced by media presentations.”

The Van De Vord (2010) study focused exclusively on college students. The current study utilized a much more diverse sample of adult respondents. The survey was conducted over the internet which, in and of itself, presents additional limitations as discussed in the previous chapter. Although the survey sample was a nationwide random sample, it was random only among those who had given their permission to the service company that distributed the survey (SurveyMonkey).

The scope of this study was limited. Additional information was available in this study which was not utilized but could have been. Other defining characteristics gathered by the
survey included sex, race, income level, education, and geographic location; all characteristics which were not used in the data analysis.

**Recommendations for Further Study**

The survey method of research is considered appropriate for self-reported beliefs and behaviors. However, the differences between self-reported behavior and actual behavior are an inherent weakness in the survey method of social research. In this study, the survey attempted to acquire empirical data regarding the information literacy skill level of the respondents (the dependent variable) by asking them a series of questions around their on-line behavior, i.e. “When searching on-line, I always consider the author of the information.” 94% of the respondents indicated agreement with the statement. This strong response is in contrast with previous studies and suggests a problem with the question - perhaps due to a confidence bias of the respondents. If this statistic were representative of the actual practice of the general population, it is doubtful that this study and others like it would have been undertaken.

Due to these weaknesses associated with survey research, the relationship between information literacy and media literacy might be analyzed well using other research methods. For example, Eszter Hargittai from Northwestern University has conducted studies of on-line behavior by collecting data from in-person observations (Hargittai, 2012). Further, using modern technology, an effective ethnographic study could be designed to monitor actual on-line information seeking behavior electronically. Nonetheless, in this study, relying solely on self-reported on-line behavior has proven to be somewhat problematic.

**Conclusions**

For many years, media literacy programs have been very successful in their educational goals of empowering students with a repertoire of competences that allow them to critically
analyze media messages with their own interests in mind. The best way to bring about a healthy skepticism in thinking is to be convinced that it is justified. Something changes in the thought process of a person when they realize they have been misled. Just as mass media messages are subject to use by advertisers and countless special interests, so are on-line messages. If the curriculum developed for media literacy is successful, why is the same training not applied to on-line information literacy?

In spite of its limitations, this study confirmed the weak statistical correlation between media literacy skills and improved information literacy skills. In today’s advanced media culture, effective media literacy skills are widely recognized as an invaluable survival tool. In summary, successful media literacy education programs generally include a student’s analysis of his/her own media use, an identification of the author’s purpose and point of view, a knowledge of production techniques, an evaluation of media representation of the world, and an understanding of the economic structure of the media industry (Van De Vord, 2010, p. 172). At the same time, information literacy education is usually limited to training to the use of library resources – resources, it could be added, that information seekers are increasingly less likely to use with the growing ubiquity of internet connections. The one commonality between today’s media literacy education and information literacy education is the focus on the identification of the author and his/her purpose. It is possible that this common factor could be an influence for the weak statistical correlation between the two fields.

Perhaps the work of Hall, McChesney, McLuhan, Postman, Potter, etc. can provide a foundation for creating an effective information literacy curriculum. Perhaps another method to encourage information literacy could be to apply more of the media literacy educational approach in the education of information literacy. Perhaps allowing a student to thoroughly
understand the internet, same as the media, would foster the same healthy skepticism. Information literacy education should include a student’s analysis of his/her own information seeking habits, a knowledge of internet production techniques, an evaluation of the internet’s representation of the world, an understanding of the economic structure of the internet industry, as well as the identification of the author’s purpose and point of view. Additional study around this construct is warranted.
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