Dear Ms. Beutelspacher,
dear Professor Stock,
ladies and gentlemen, good morning.

It seems, that the promotion of media literacy and information literacy has become a central task for scientific librarians since quite a long time. No doubt, there is a rapid change in the information and media landscape, knowledge terms, user perspectives about knowledge, information and the function of libraries.

With such a large amount of change, information competence became absolutely necessary for students, teachers and researchers as a basis for understanding options, forming opinions, making decisions, and carrying out informed and responsible actions. Therefore the subject of information literacy is in the focus of specialists in information science as well. Take the Department of Information Science of the Heinrich Heine University for example, which has invited to a symposium and workshops about information literacy today.

Looking at the subject of information literacy from a librarian's point of view, I must say, it is well appreciated that information scientists have a deeper look into this interesting subject. This is, because over the past twenty years, other groups have not quite achieved even providing a clear definition, what information literacy means. [1]

Take the German Rectors' Conference for instance, which was assisted by highly qualified library experts. They recently published the paper "Universities in the digital age: A new understanding of information literacy" - and they concluded: "However, the requirements are continuously changing together with the technological fundament of information, so that all players need to adapt to these changing environment". [2]

In order to understand, why even the definition of information literacy remains quite vague, we have to look briefly into the major changes, which effected libraries in the way, they positioned themselves.

With the internet being established, some scientists concluded, that there would be no transportation of matter, no books, just processing of information into knowledge and processing of questions into answers, all done digitally.

Later, we came to the concept of the hybrid libraries, which enable the transformation of electronic into printed publications and in reverse.

Nowadays, "E-science" is shorthand for the set of tools and technologies we – librarians, teachers and researchers – need to support networked science. Future services provided by

[1] cf. Sühl-Strohmeyer, Wilfried (2012): Handbuch Informationskompetenz. De Gruyter Saur Verlag 2012.
[2] Hochschulrektorenkonferenz (2012): Hochschule im digitalen Zeitalter: Informationskompetenz neu begreifen – Prozesse anders steuern. Recommendation of the 13th member assembly, 20 November 2012. Online: http://www.hrk.de/mitglieder/service/empfehlung-informationskompetenz/ (6 February 2013).

librarians contain an integrated search of all printed and on-line available information resources.

Consequently, some experts created the concept of the “teaching library”, where the promotion of media and information literacy becomes a new central task of library work. Libraries take position as places of teaching and learning, and they become strong partners of the educational institutions, such as faculties and institutes of the universities, but also of schools as well as of institutions of adult education.

Even if we all agreed on the concept of a „teaching library“, there is quite some work to do behind the scenes before we reach a glorious future – and not many libraries have achieved to expand from a simple set of courses in information literacy towards an integrated concept. Very rarely this deficit is criticized in the library community. *Rafael Ball*, director of the University Library Regensburg is a rare example. He doubts, whether it is worth to spend hours of courses in information literacy without evaluating their effectiveness – wouldn’t it be better to invest in improving search engines and retrieval systems?

Marianne Ingold, director of the University Library Muttenz inSwitzerland, offered interesting insights too: Why do we have so few high quality empirical research work on information literacy on one hand, and why does this contrast so obviously with a flood (fladd) of simple “How-to” articles and step-by-step tutorials in the course modules? It seems, that we have quite a substantial gap between marketing-driven and theoretical declarations of intent and proven concepts for teaching information literacy.[3]

Which format is right to teach information literacy? How can we achieve longterm success? Are librarians and information scientists the right people to teach information literacy? And if you agree: What level of information competence do the teachers need and where do they get their new competences from? How can librarians remain in a nutral position and avoid new barriers between the users and their access to literature and information?

I appreciate a lot, that we have an active and highly engaged Department of Information Science right here at the Heinrich Heine University and that you are going to spend time and interest in the field of information literacy. It was a pleasure and an honor for me being invited to give a welcome speech to your symposium. I hope you have inspiring discussions, new insights and whenever it comes to practical implementation, we, the librarians, are happy to stay in touch and share your thoughts and results.

Thank you.

Dr. Irmgard Siebert, 07.02.2013

---

[3] cf. Sühl-Strohmeyer, Wilfried (2012): Handbuch Informationskompetenz. De Gruyter Saur Verlag 2012, page 12 – 35.
Ingold, Marianne (2005): Das bibliothekarische Konzept der Informationskompetenz: ein Überblick. Institut für Bibliothekswissenschaft der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Berliner Handreichungen zur Bibliothekswissenschaft; 128. Online: http://www.ib.hu-berlin.de/~kumlau/handreichungen/h128/h128.pdf (6 February 2013).