

Digital Content Consumption Trends in the Website of Singapore's National Information Literacy Programme

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this article is to utilise web statistics to analyse the consumption patterns of digital content - such as blog articles, videos, online learning courses, infographics and cheat sheets - found on the official website of Singapore's National Information Literacy Programme, with a view of informing forward planning. The secondary objective would be to gauge the effectiveness of the SURE Facebook page in marketing the content of the SURE portal.

KEYWORDS

Adult Learning, Content Consumption, Educational Resources, Information Literacy, Information Seeking, Library Websites, Media Consumption, Online Learning

INTRODUCTION

The objective of this paper is to analyse the consumption patterns of digital content found on the official website of Singapore's National Information Literacy Programme (www.nlb.gov.sg/sure), with a view of informing forward planning. The secondary objective would be to gauge the effectiveness of the SURE Facebook page (<http://fb.com/sgsure>) in marketing the content of the SURE portal.

The National Library Board (NLB) undertook the National Information Literacy Programme (NILP) from 2012 to 2016 to promote awareness of information literacy among Singaporeans. According to the American Library Association (1989), "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".

Prior to the launch of the campaign, the NLB explored existing models of Information Literacy which have been used to raise the awareness, understanding and adoption of Information Literacy, such as The Big 6, SCONUL's Seven Pillars, and the National Information Literacy Framework of Scotland (Scottish Information Literacy Project, 2013). However, none of these were found to be suitable for adoption in Singapore. For instance, The Big 6 resources were designed for the American audience and is a proprietary model, while pillars 5 to 7 of SCONUL's Seven Pillars were 'challenging' to achieve (Sayers, 2006), especially for a new national initiative targeted at both schools and the general public. Like the Seven Pillars, the Scottish framework was deemed more suitable for an academic environment, even though it was meant to extend to the workplace and lifelong learning as well.

As the term "information literacy" (IL) was not easy for the man-in-the-street to grasp, a nationwide public awareness campaign was branded with the acronym, "S.U.R.E." or "SURE" to simplify the concept of IL into four (4) basic building blocks or SURE principles, namely:

DOI: 10.4018/IJLIS.2019010101

- **Source:** Make sure that the source of information is credible and reliable
- **Understand:** Know what you are reading, search for facts rather than opinions
- **Research:** Investigate thoroughly before making a conclusion, check and compare with multiple sources
- **Evaluate:** Look from different angles and exercise fair judgement (Teo, 2014; Cheng, 2013)

The objective of the NILP was to make Information Literacy more accessible to the two major target audiences while promoting the importance of being discerning when handling information:

1. **The Education Sector:** comprising 18,539 teachers and 225,764 students in 184 secondary schools, junior colleges and mixed-level schools in Singapore. (Ministry of Education, Singapore, 2016). This was the foundation and initial phase of the National Information Literacy Campaign in 2012, and it preceded the wider SURE. campaign for the general public by over a year. Key strategies used to reach out to these included formal education, through content and skills that were embedded in the school curricula and taught in the context of local issues and needs within the schools in Singapore. A variety of accessible Information Literacy resources was produced as supplementary materials to support classroom teaching. Numerous training activities were organised to engage and reach out to students and teachers to nurture their understanding and application of IL skills, such as assembly talks in schools, competitions for schools, etc.
2. **The General Public:** comprising the non-school sectors of the working population, especially the Professional, Managers, Executives and Technicians (PMETs). Parents with children of school-going ages were also included in this group. This was the second phase of the National Information Literacy Programme, which emerged in the middle of 2013, as the initial phase in the Education sector went into steady-state. Key outreach strategies for the general public included the annual SURE Campaigns which covered a variety of publicity and marketing using traditional media and social media, coupled with on-ground activations such as library dress-ups, public events and training workshops held at workplaces.

Supporting the physical aspects of the NILP were its digital assets, which included the SURE portal (www.nlb.gov.sg/sure) and a Facebook page (<http://fb.com/sgsure>). A wide range of web-based instruction resources to support blended and online instruction - based on Siemens and Tittenberger's categorisation (Smith, 2010) - were produced, as the NILP training programmes were not provided directly by NLB within the structure of a campus or school Information Literacy programme. The provision of web-based instructional resources also meant that NLB could overcome resource constraints and provide just-in-time learning opportunities (Smith, 2010).

The URLs of these two digital assets were embedded in the calls-to-action found in all print and digital resources generated by the NILP team, as well as being featured prominently in all marketing and publicity collaterals such as advertorials, posters, brochures and library dress-up materials.

The NILP achieved a total of 5,281,846 digital and physical interactions against a target of 5 million interactions set from 2012 to 2016, achieving 106.6% of the overall target. In this context, digital interactions refer to the number of page views on the SURE portal and engagement on SURE Facebook, whereas physical interactions refer to the number of people attending SURE workshops, talks, events and which have interacted with SURE content. Digital interactions accounted for over 70% of the interactions, most of which came from the SURE portal.

To contextualise the above figures, a comparison was made with the cumulative page views of a national campaign (aimed at collecting national memories) of a similar scale. Figure 1 shows the cumulative page views of two websites of two concurrent campaigns. The following inferences can be made:

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