

**The roots and future of information literacy:
Reflections from 11+ years working with Paul G.
Zurkowski, Esq.
Jeffrey “JK” Kelly, MAT¹**

¹President, Universal Information Literacies Association (UiLA)

Abstract: As we approach the 50th anniversary in 2024 of first Information Industry Association president Paul Zurkowski’s 30-page information literacy founding report to the U.S. Commission on Libraries and Information Science, Washington, DC USA where he publicly identified, named and defined information literacy (IL, InfoLit), it is important to reflect on the roots, development and future of IL. Reflections are based on 11+ years learning, working and traveling with Mr. Zurkowski until his passing in January of 2022. Mr. Zurkowski’s “Report to the Commission” “The Information Service Environment Relationships and Priorities” that launched IL in 1974 at the dawn of the Information Age as part of the National Program for Library and Information Services designated as “Related Paper Number 5”, is even more relevant today and will be presented and explored including his quotes on democracy, active citizenship, and libraries in context of IL. Lastly, the key events that led to starting an international professional nonprofit educational public charity association to represent IL professionals worldwide, the growing international IL community and how to increase critical thinking through IL, the Universal Information Literacies Association (UiLA), will also be presented.

Keywords: Creative thinking; critical thinking; global; information literacy; nonprofit; Paul George Zurkowski, Esq.; public charity; sustainable; thinking critically; Universal Information Literacies Association (UiLA)



Prologue- Information Literacy Pioneer Paul G. Zurkowski's Opening Quotes on Democracy, Active Citizenship and Libraries

¹“Now is the time to combine public library and private sector experts to put in play a program of introducing citizens to the power of Information Literacy to resist attempts to intimidate and control them and to empower them as citizens in making democracy and their lives work. It's a wonderful world when you are involved in it...”

²“We, the people of the world, face awful crises arising in large measure from the control of information, a control in turn arising from the inability of citizens to navigate the super abundance of information that they face, while at the same time other interests are perfecting information techniques including disinformation, to disable citizens in order to achieve their self-serving goals regardless of the dangers to civilization. Information Literacy is an antidote to information control exercised by the special interests.”



Paul G. Zurkowski from his keynote speech at the 28th Annual Conference of the Association of Independent Information Professionals (AIIP.org), April 4th, 2014 in Baltimore, Maryland (MD) USA.

Introduction

I am retired teacher JK Kelly from the Washington, DC USA area. I had the privilege of working with information literacy pioneer and visionary Paul G. Zurkowski from 2010 until his passing last year. First, I'd like to thank Professor Katsirikou and committee for inviting me to give a speech at this 15th Qualitative and Quantitative Methods in Libraries International Conference 2023 here at the Hellenic Mediterranean University in the port city of Heraklion on the beautiful island of Crete, Greece. I am here today to speak about my experience with Mr. Zurkowski, information literacy (which I will also refer to as IL and InfoLit) and about our new nonprofit project, the Universal Information Literacies Association (the UiLA) named after Zurkowski's call to action so long ago on the final page of his foundational IL report, and I quote, ³“...to achieve universal information literacy...” Zurkowski (1974). We can achieve this only if there is enough interest from Information Literacy Professionals here and in the future, for this association to be a force in the world for educating others about the power of being information literate. Yes, IF is a small word but it has a BIG meaning. IF is even part of the word information. So, IF we act based on good reliable information the UiLA will succeed. So, we shall see...

Before his passing Paul asked me to make sure that librarians around the world knew how much he loved and appreciated their efforts in researching and developing information literacy since 1974. An interesting story that Paul told me a few months before his passing was that after his report was published in November of 1974 in Washington, DC, there was absolute silence in relation to

his report. It was ignored or at least not understood to the point where he wondered if he would ever reach anybody with his vision of how important it was to be information literate, not just in reading, writing and math, but all information in order to survive and thrive with the complex technologies invading their lives then and the onslaught of information overload so as to be good active citizens. You can imagine how pleased he was when he finally started getting contacted by librarians and scientists from Europe and elsewhere overseas with enthusiasm and questions about his report. So, to be clear, know that my friend Paul Zurkowski cared deeply about librarians, information scientists and all others in academia who were and are a part of the growing international information literacy community. And to be sure he had a special place in his heart and mind for the early IL adapters from overseas.

My full name is Jeffrey Vincent Paul Kelly. It means God's peace of the victorious and humble warrior. I don't make this stuff up. It goes back thousands of years. However, I identify with my much simpler initials, JK. This nickname is easy to remember from the English alphabet:  a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i,  But if some of you prefer to call me by my given name Jeffrey, that's okay, my parents would like that. I am here because I worked with, learned from and traveled with my mentor, colleague and friend, whom some of you knew in person and most of you know as the person who coined the phrase information literacy. Of course, I am referring to, as I mentioned, Mr. Paul George Zurkowski, Esquire, a trained lawyer experienced in intellectual property and specifically copyright. My collaboration with Mr. Zurkowski started when he came to my parochial school classroom in Washington, DC in 2010 where he expressed how pleased he was to observe that I was teaching 11-year old 6th grade students critical thinking through information literacy. I continued collaborating with Mr. Zurkowski until his passing last year at the age of 89 on January 31st, 2022. May God rest his soul.

As we approach the 50th anniversary next year in November 2024 of first Information Industry Association president Paul Zurkowski's original 30-page IL founding report to the United States National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS) in Washington, DC where he named, defined and launched IL, it is important to reflect on the roots, development and future of information literacy. (The NCLIS was created by U.S. Congress Public Law 91-345 in 1970 to increase access to information. The NCLIS was consolidated into the Institute of Museum and Library Services in 2008). My reflections are based on 11+ years with Mr. Zurkowski developing his and our vision for the future of IL. These reflections will include the context of how, as a state certified teacher, I led up to discovering Mr. Zurkowski and information literacy by previously studying information as a stand-alone subject sparked by an email exchange in 1999 with the latest Nobel Prize in Physics recipient 2022, Quantum Information Physicist, Professor Anton Zeilinger of Austria. Other important InfoLit related encounters I had will be presented such as with the late Dr. Indrajit Banerjee, former director of Media Literacy, Knowledge Societies Division at UNESCO as part of their Communications and Information Sector

and also a memorable encounter I had with Dr. Daniel Boorstin, Pulitzer Prize winning historian and twelfth Librarian of the United States Congress. Mr. Zurkowski's "Report to the Commission" titled, *The Information Service Environment Relationships and Priorities* that launched IL in 1974 at the dawn of the Information Age as part of the National Program for Library and Information Services also known as "Related Paper Number 5," is even more relevant today almost 50 years later and will be presented and referenced including some of his inspiring quotes on democracy, active citizenship, and libraries related to the main theme of this important conference. The development and vision of the future of IL such as information optics and action literacy will also be presented.

Also, I will present the key events that led to starting our international professional nonprofit educational public charity, the previously mentioned Universal Information Literacies Association (also known as the UiLA) that was started by Paul and I and launched with our team of six information research professionals one of whom, a woman professor who studied Library and Information Science and who has a PhD in Management Science and who translated, into Chinese, the book, *Zurkowski's 40 Year Information Literacy Movement Fueling the Next 40 Years of Action Literacy: Empowering We the People in the Information Age*, is now in a UiLA consultant role because of returning to her very busy full time university duties. Of course, Paul and I did not start the UiLA to be in direct competition with any other similar InfoLit associations or organizations. In fact, we created the UiLA to cooperate with other good IL organizations and to do our part in the IL universe. We will only be competing against those who oppose appropriately teaching and increasing critical thinking and information literacy throughout the world. We created the UiLA to be an overview organization to the myriad of groups and Information Literacy Professionals (ILPs) who advance IL by proactively researching, developing, applying and teaching information literacy. The UiLA is academic by nature based on library science and information science. The UiLA is NOT political, ideological or denominational; instead, it is independent, grounded in scientific evidence, experience and reason in pursuit of accuracy through its academic integrity, IL research, curating, definitions, development and teaching, supporting an inclusive and harmonious sustainable global information society. And, I want to make clear that we are a not-for-profit organization where by U.S. law any money we take in, after expenses are covered, goes right back into the mission of the UiLA which is to represent the interests of Information Literacy Professionals, increase critical thinking through IL and be the place where the growing international IL community can connect and gather. Currently, we have four professionals voluntarily running our nonprofit organization out of the Washington, DC area. I am the founding president appointed by Mr. Zurkowski back in the spring of 2021; Vice President Christopher Adams, who along with English, is fluent in Russian, applies information literacy thru a linguistics, culture and business perspective; Secretary/Writer Wayne Marshall applies information literacy thru a psychologist's perspective and Treasurer Andres Mallea from Bolivia, who

speaks fluent Spanish and Portuguese focuses on financial literacy. Having already invited more women from the library and information sciences to be on our volunteer advisory committee we hope to add them as soon as appropriate. And it is important to note that our first two UiLA donors are women. Paul wanted and I want every part of the world and every type of person to be represented at the UiLA. The Universal Information Literacies Association (the UiLA) will not hire nor discriminate based on ethnicity, race, skin color, national origin, religion, sex, gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, medical status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by the UiLA. The UiLA will welcome those to join us who have an ability to help the UiLA increase the Information Literacy rate worldwide.

The title of my speech is: *The Roots and Future of Information Literacy: Reflections on 11+ Years Working with Paul G. Zurkowski, Esquire*. And if this speech were adapted into a children's book the title could be: *The Story of Mr. Z, Me and Information Literacy!* I say this, not be cute but to emphasize how important it is to be able to teach IL to the very young. As Einstein is quoted as saying "...all physical theories...ought to lend themselves to so simple a description that even a child could understand them." And I adapt Einstein's teaching concept to include, for the youngest among us, teaching the seemingly abstract concept of information literacy.

Roots/Context

It is important to know the context of Paul Zurkowski's roots to better understand what is baked into the "DNA" of IL.

As former US president Theodore "Teddy" Roosevelt is quoted as saying over 100 years ago, "People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care." Something those working with the UiLA will also expect from all of you. And I can tell you that though Paul Zurkowski was brilliant with a 163 IQ, he was also a humble man and he cared deeply about the international Information Literacy community. And I plan to follow in his footsteps in this regard.

So first, my context/background: I was born in 1958 at Georgetown University Hospital in Washington, DC and raised in the DC metropolitan area where I've spent most of my life and where I currently live with my wife. Our three adult children are on opposite coasts of America. Our son, the oldest, and daughter-in-law just made me and my wife first time grandparents this past November! I earned a Master of Arts in Teaching degree with a special education focus from Trinity University in Washington, DC in 1997 and a Bachelor of Arts in Individual Studies, with a focus on music and American Studies from the University of Maryland in 1986. Before I retired from teaching, I taught many subjects: music, algebra, geometry, English, US and world history among other subjects. I also coached girls', boys' and co-ed soccer teams having earned an international preliminary coaching award from England and a US Soccer

National “B” coaching license. However, my passion is teaching information literacy driven by critical (and creative) thinking. So, in order to do this, I currently work full time as a professional chauffeur, and I run the UiLA between rides and on my days off!

Paul Zurkowski was born in 1932 in Madison, Wisconsin USA. His interest in literacy and information can be traced all the way back to when he was a young boy during World War II in Palmyra, Wisconsin and his father gave him a gift of metal printing typeset letters. This fascinated him and further developed his literacy into, “...one who knows the letters” Merriam-Webster (2023), as literacy was defined in 15th century Latin. As he grew, he turned this fascination with letters into printing his own local advertising and shoppers guide that introduced him to the importance of good reliable databases which became a side business that gave him spending money during high school and helped pay for his University of Wisconsin undergraduate and law school education. And this is when he learned that though making money was important, being ethical/moral was always first. This laid the foundation for his future as founding president of the for-profit Information Industry Association 1969-1989 and his information literacy eureka moment in 1974. After law school he moved to Washington, DC and was there at the time of the National Science Foundation’s International Conference on Scientific Information November 16-21, 1958. He became a public servant working in government using his newly acquired legal mind at the Interstate Commerce Commission. Here he met his wife DC native Margaret “Peg” Becker Zurkowski, with whom he had 6 children, 11 grandchildren and 62 years of marriage. They married in Washington, DC in 1960 and moved back to Wisconsin where he practiced law and continued in government working as second district representative for United States Democrat Congressman Robert Kastenmeier. Later Kastenmeier was honored for his legislative work on intellectual property and copyright. In 1962 Zurkowski left Kastenmeier to serve his country as a US Army Judge Advocate General. Also known as a JAG lawyer. In 1964 upon completion of his military service he moved his family back to DC to rejoin Congressman Kastenmeier as a lawyer and legislative assistant and among other legislation, worked closely on what more than a decade later became the Copyright Act of 1976. Zurkowski was instrumental in developing the “Fair Use” doctrine that was then enshrined in statutory law. Kastenmeier was ready for the “Copyright Act of 1968” but Zurkowski said that “If you do this now, you’ll be back in five years because of all this new technology.” He trusted his young protégé and took eight more years to make sure the technologies were factored in and because, in part, of Paul’s perceptiveness, the Copyright Act of 1976 is still the foundation of modern American copyright law. It was on this foundation of starting his own printing based business, lawyer training, focus on intellectual property, testifying before the US Congress more than anyone on, copyright, information and the emerging technologies like computers and the Internet that he was picked to be founding president of the pioneering Information Industry Association (the for-profit IIA) by the movers and shakers of information based businesses seeking ways to protect their content within the rapidly advancing

technologies of the 1950s and 1960s. First these publishing and emerging tech companies, hired Zurkowski in 1968 as legal counsel to draft the original charter for the Information Industry Association that later, sometime after Zurkowski left in 1989, merged with the Software Association to become today's industry standard Software and Information Industry Association (the SIIA). Once his charter was adopted, he became founding Executive Director/President and resigned as legal counsel understanding the importance of democratizing leadership. For five years Zurkowski was engrossed in information as a stand-alone product and service every day of his professional life. So, it is no wonder that this led to his historic document *The Information Service Environment Relationships and Priorities* in November of 1974.

As groundbreaking Information Industry Association president one of Zurkowski's jobs was to raise funds for the nascent association, especially by increasing dues paying memberships. Zurkowski increased the original 9 to 12 founding companies to over 700 information/technology focused businesses by 1989. However, his toughest but most exhilarating duty was to convince even the business executives who started his association that information itself was a product and a service. Starting in 1969 representing the IIA, Zurkowski eventually became known as the "Johnny Appleseed of Information" seeding the world traveling across the continental United States and across the Pacific Ocean to Hawaii. And across the Oceans to England, France, Australia, and most noteworthy for this conference, as IIA president he came to Greece! He was even invited to the Soviet Union by Communist leader Leonid Brezhnev's nephew in the 1980s seeding ideas of openness and democracy at the Kremlin. Along the way innovative information businesses sprang up from the info "seeds" he planted that brought information itself as a product and service, with its intrinsic value, from the collective unconscious into at least the business world's consciousness. He and a small visionary group of Information Age pioneers, like Vinton Serf one of the fathers of the Internet, helped set the groundwork for modern businesses like Google/Alphabet, Microsoft, Apple, Infosys, Amazon, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook/Meta, other social media platforms and millions of other "information" businesses and organizations. So it's important to note that the first developer of IL had a fascination with the building blocks of language; starting a business at a young age with printing based on creating sellable content; ethics and morality; law school and intellectual property/copyright; government work; military/Army service; pioneering the Information Age with the seminal IIA and connecting with academia through library and information science via his report to the US Commission on Libraries and Information Science in 1974. In other words what is baked into the "DNA/blueprint" of IL from the beginning: are the building blocks of language, ethical and moral business and behavior practices, law training, scientific information, government and military service, technology, the information industry and library and information science. Information is everywhere.

Like many here, I have my story of how I came across information literacy and thus Mr. Zurkowski. I was a master's level special education teacher at my high

school alma mater, Walt Whitman in Bethesda, Maryland where all teachers were required to choose a professional development subject. So, since I ended up teaching multiple subjects: math, history, English, music and others along with coaching soccer and became conscious of how critical thinking and information were always relevant, I chose information itself as a stand-alone subject for my professional teaching development. Quite quickly this led to an email exchange in 1999 with Austrian physicist Anton Zeilinger where I asked a philosophical question: Do the bits/letters/ingredients of communication have meaning or do we put meaning into them? He immediately replied that that was exactly what he was researching. This brief, though powerful encounter, has continued to be an inspiration as I delved deeper into the nature of information while practically testing information theories each day in the classroom where I had a student with a two digit IQ in the same classroom as a student with a very high IQ in the 160s and every IQ level in-between. Over my teaching career I taught regular students, advanced students, autistic students, Down-syndrome students, non-verbal students, the physically handicapped and other learners in public, private and parochial schools. Every level of student from 3rd to 12th grades, with their multiple intelligences and diverse learning styles. Within this context the IL teaching materials I am presenting today were developed since 1999 thru practical testing and refining as a teacher in the daily classroom. Once I started to better understand the nature of information, my encounter in the early 1980s with the twelfth librarian of Congress (1975-1987), Daniel Boorstin came into focus. Boorstin was a guest on the Peabody Award winning Larry King Radio Show, talking about how there wasn't much that was new under the sun: So, I was able to get through when I called and asked what was actually new today under the sun. Boorstin answered that, "It is new that we know this table is not static [he proceeded to knock on the table]. That atoms are moving within. The table has information in it. It is information come to life." Studying and applying information as a stand-alone subject led me to discover information literacy and Paul Zurkowski in 2009 in the Washington, DC area.

Helpful Perspectives for Understanding Information as a Stand-Alone Subject

To understand what information *literacy* is, it's important to first understand what *information* itself is. In 2013 I again contacted physicist Professor Anton Zeilinger, this time on behalf of Paul and myself and asked if we could use his quote about information and reality in our then upcoming book. ⁵"...Information Literacy...Fueling...Action Literacy," Zurkowski (2014). Zeilinger granted us permission. On page 28 of this book from 2014, is Zeilinger's quote: ⁶"It is operationally impossible to separate Reality and Information." Zeilinger (2011). Quantum Information Physicist, Professor Anton Zeilinger, University of Vienna, Austria. Director of the Vienna branch of the *Institute for Quantum Optics and Quantum Information*, of the Austrian Academy of Sciences. Based on this quote and my other IL related proactive research since 1999 and working with Paul Zurkowski, I have created the following teaching materials

and perspectives that can help in understanding information and thus information literacy:

IN – FORM; In – FORMATION; Intentionally putting bits/symbols into a FORM (Greek morfi) to create meaning, language, communication. The IF within InFormation relates to the quantum probabilities where observer and object are dependent. So, built into the word information, are ways to understand its meaning.

“Water is to marine life as information is to people.” – JK.

Information is everywhere according to Zeilinger and Boorstin and no one has yet proven of a place where information DOES NOT exist including across the universe and even in a black hole.

Accepting this perspective helps me grasp the enormity and omnipresence of information. We are literally “swimming” in it.

Information can also be understood comparing it to food

“The nutritious ingredients and the meals they create are all food as the data and the meaning they create are all information.” – JK

Systems in simple form- Input → Processing → Output The Teaching & Learning Feedback Loop

The information we choose to accept can be divided into “nutritious” information and harmful information.

Garbage in → Garbage out. Good reliable info in → (Then we can decide what to share...)

Biofeedback

Ingest → Digest → Energy

Accept → Process → Share

Food- Not Nutritious

Information- Harmful

Empty calories >	Useless information, “It was hot last year”
Junk food >	Short term enjoyment, “Trivial Pursuit”
Processed food >	Irrelevant AND relevant, “Formulaic pop music or a laugh track”
Past expiration date >	Titanic- Good info not timely
Stale food >	Misinformation
Sour milk >	<u>—(You think of an information equivalent)</u>
Rotten food >	Fake news
Contaminated food >	Disinformation
Food poisoning >	“I feel horrible!” Information overload
(overabundance)	
Serious food allergy >	Exposure could lead to death
Poisonous food >	(Collective knowledge is power)

Poison put in food > Deceptive information used to cause death

Food- Nutritious

Information- Helpful

Vitamin C	>	Accurate
Probiotic	>	Authentic
Iodine	>	Access that is appropriate
Almonds	>	Context- understood
Pure water	>	Clear
Belgian Chocolate	>	Relevant
Fine wine	>	Refined like gold and diamonds
Perfect meal/time >	Timely	
Organic soil	>	Good goal is moral/ethical
Certified clean natural <u>equivalent)</u>	>	<u>(You think of an information</u>
Local food	>	Creates good energy and community
Sun light	>	Sustains the life

Perspective on Literacy

The meaning of literacy has evolved from 15th century Latin ⁴“one who knows the letters” Merriam-Webster (2023), evolving to “learned,” “able” and to “function.” At its most basic, literacy is to function in life for survival. So, to be information literate is to be literate in not only reading, writing and math but ALL information from whatever source that is appropriately processed/filtered in order to function/survive/thrive in society.

So, to put this in context [context is one of six key building blocks of Information Literacy]: The ancient Sentinelese people, who are isolated by choice, are information literate in context of their North Sentinel Island in the Bay of Bengal, India enough to have survived as long as 60,000+ years but whom would be information *illiterate* in context of Harvard University. And students, information literate from Harvard Yard, would be information *illiterate* on the North Sentinel Island...if they survived.

Information Literacy

In·for·ma·tion lit·er·a·cy [in-fər-'mā-shən 'li-t(ə-)rə-sē] noun. The ability to extract, accept and create good value from reliable sources for beneficial decision making and problem solving.

– Kelly and Zurkowski

Being conscious that information surrounds us like water surrounds fish, may help us be more intentional on where in the IL academic universe we choose to focus. Because starting from our unique “DNA” there will be a place in the IL universe where, whatever is unique to us like our fingerprint, can best be utilized.

This brings me to my conversation with the late Indrajit Banerjee of UNESCO on the Bosphorus Strait gala dinner cruise at the conclusion of the 1st European Conference on Information Literacy in Istanbul October of 2013. We agreed that information is all encompassing and that media literacy is specifically about

how to best process information through various media. And that regardless, we need to work together and not compete, especially for the special needs and disadvantaged youth of the world. The Universal Information Literacies Association (UiLA) welcomes all good literacies: The original- Reading and Writing Literacy; Mathematics Literacy; Media Literacy; Financial Literacy; Health Literacy; Cultural Literacy; Data/Digital/Computer Literacy; Belief System/Lifestyle Literacy...And the myriad of other mushrooming good beneficial decision making and problem solving literacies that seem to sprout up everywhere these days. (And we must be careful not to dilute the power of the word literacy).

The Universal Information Literacies Association (the UiLA) Project

Upon returning to the Washington, DC area energized from the 1st ECIL where Paul had delivered his keynote speech titled *“Information Literacy is Dead. Long Live Information Literacy!”* to 300+ mostly library science and information science professors from over 60 countries, we began in earnest to look towards the future of IL. Paul was retired but I was still a fulltime classroom teacher teaching IL and critical thinking within a variety of subjects where I was able to test our IL ideas in the classroom. So, while he worked daily on our project, I was able to meet at least once a week for the next steps that eventually, after many iterations, led to the Universal Information Literacies Association Project being launched with a team of six in the spring of 2021 that became an official US government recognized nonprofit association last May of 2022, almost exactly one year ago.

The Universal Information Literacies Association (the UiLA) Project list:

IF we can develop many of the following, the UiLA will be THE association to represent the interests of ILPs.

- Website- uilaz.info
- Represent the interests of Information Literacy Professionals (ILP). An ILP is someone who proactively researches, develops, applies and teaches information literacy
- Be a place where the international information literacy community can connect and gather
- Increase the critical thinking rate worldwide through the system of information literacy
- Research and write the history of IL relevant subjects like the Information Industry Association (now merged into the SIIA); Biographies for Paul Zurkowski and others key to the development of IL like Dr. F. Woody Horton, Jr. and longtime librarian IL advocates like Esther Grassian and others; And of course, the history of IL itself
- Curate and lead an effort to digitize the six boxes of materials Paul Zurkowski donated to the Albin O. Kuhn Library and Gallery at the University of Maryland Baltimore County, Catonsville, MD

- Accept more volunteers vetted through Volunteer Match, San Francisco, CA
- Manage fundraising: through fundraising events, grants, donations, merchandise etc.
- Develop certification courses and CEUs
- Develop the IL/AL Stakeholder Discussion Process and technology app (software) within the Good Info Café. Like refining gold and diamonds
- Develop iFLAP as CPU software
- Teach IL globally, especially to the marginalized youth struggling to survive in the world
- First Zurkowski Awards to be announced this October and November 2023
- Organize the planning committee for the 50th anniversary, in November 2024, of the launching of IL. Hopefully, to be held at the Library of Congress, Washington, DC USA. Second Zurkowski Awards to be announced and presented among other activities

Among other relevant projects...

Other Relevant Subjects Important to the Future of IL

Information optics = The way information looks influences its effectiveness. As in semiotics.

Space and the challenges of the universe beyond Earth that Zurkowski talked about with increasing intensity near the end of his life where InfoLit can be extremely relevant. He even mentioned UFOs. Now also known as UAP, unidentified aerial/anomalous phenomena. After all, information literacy can be applied from the atom to the farthest reaches of the universe.

Artificial intelligence/ChatGPT- What, that is artificial, is better than the original? Ai etc. is a neutral tool that is programmer, database, controller and user dependent.

All technology is neutral. All tech is user dependent. All technology was/is created and designed and programmed by people.

A hammer can be used to build a home for someone in need or to immorally hit someone over the head. So, it all depends on who is controlling the technology and how it is received and/or rejected.

The Future of Information Literacy

The future of information literacy is as a foundation for Action Literacy by generating good accurate reliable information on which to base ethical actions for beneficial problem solving and decision-making. In other words, information literacy fueling action literacy. Action Literacy (also referred to as AL and ActLit) can be defined as: the ability to transform good reliable information into moral/ethical activism/actions.

In Conclusion

Some final quotes from Paul Zurkowski on democracy, governance, active citizenship, librarians and IL. The following is from my interview with him after the 1st European Conference on Information Literacy, October 2013:

⁷“Finally, ways must be found to enable ordinary people to produce and wield countervailing power to effectively restrain the harmful forces of economic inequality, media control and disruptive politics challenging the effectiveness of representative governance, [Zurkowski later clarified that, “Representative governance is **fueled by we the people, thus democracy and active citizenship**”], using IL as the framework for discourse and action...for good informed decision making. I called for a ‘Coalition for Citizen’s Information Rights and Responsibilities’ a junta organized by librarians, who I see as the informed virtuosi to wrest control of the information switches from the power mongers who are doing damage to representative governance. Honest governance is dying and needs to be given an IV injection from the IV (informed virtuosi).”
IF we can do this, we can thrive not just survive in a sustainable global democratic society of informed and thus moral citizens. ⁸“Well, what good is being information literate if the information or wisdom is not used for good?”
– Zurkowski, from his interview reflecting on his trip to Istanbul and the 1st ECIL, October 2013

IF is a small word with **BIG** consequences that is now revealed within the very important and powerful word **InF**ormation.

⁹**InF**ormation Literacy/democratic networks are, “...making the distance between doubt and certainty [accuracy] shorter” – Paul George Zurkowski, Esquire in his last interview and keynote video presentation September 2021, filmed in the Washington, DC Metropolitan Area USA

IF one can match their unique “DNA” to perform their part in the IL universe and **IF** you now know how much Paul cared and I care and **IF** I can know how much you care and **IF** we can be literate about the various forms of information that surround us and **IF** we can rely on the information literate here at this conference and who eventually tune in around the world, whom Paul called the informed virtuosi, whom I will call the information fluent, then we the people of the world can come together via transformative libraries and other mediums for every good critical and creative thinking voice to be heard through active citizenship and democracy driven by IL, information literacy, fueling AL, Action Literacy, to achieve Paul Zurkowski’s call to action so long ago for good “universal information literacy.”

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⁶Zeilinger, A., (2011). Vice-Chancellor's Open Lecture titled, "*Quantum Games and Quantum Information*" from the University of Cape Town (UCT), South Africa. From the slide at the 48:18-minute mark of the video: <https://youtu.be/s3ZPWW5NOrw>.

⁷Zurkowski, P. G., Kelly, JK, (2014). *Zurkowski's 40 Year Information Literacy Movement Fueling the Next 40 Years of Action Literacy: Empowering We the People in the Information Age*. All Good Literacies press, Washington, DC, 26-27.

⁸Zurkowski, P. G., Kelly, JK, (2014). *Zurkowski's 40 Year Information Literacy Movement Fueling the Next 40 Years of Action Literacy: Empowering We the People in the Information Age*. All Good Literacies press, Washington, DC, 17.

⁹Zurkowski, P. G., (2021). Western Balkan Information and Media Literacy International Conference Keynote Presentation Video, "*DISRUPTIVE TECHNOLOGY: From the Book to Information Literacy*." From the 7:22-minute mark of the video: <https://youtu.be/IzoC4nyabVI>