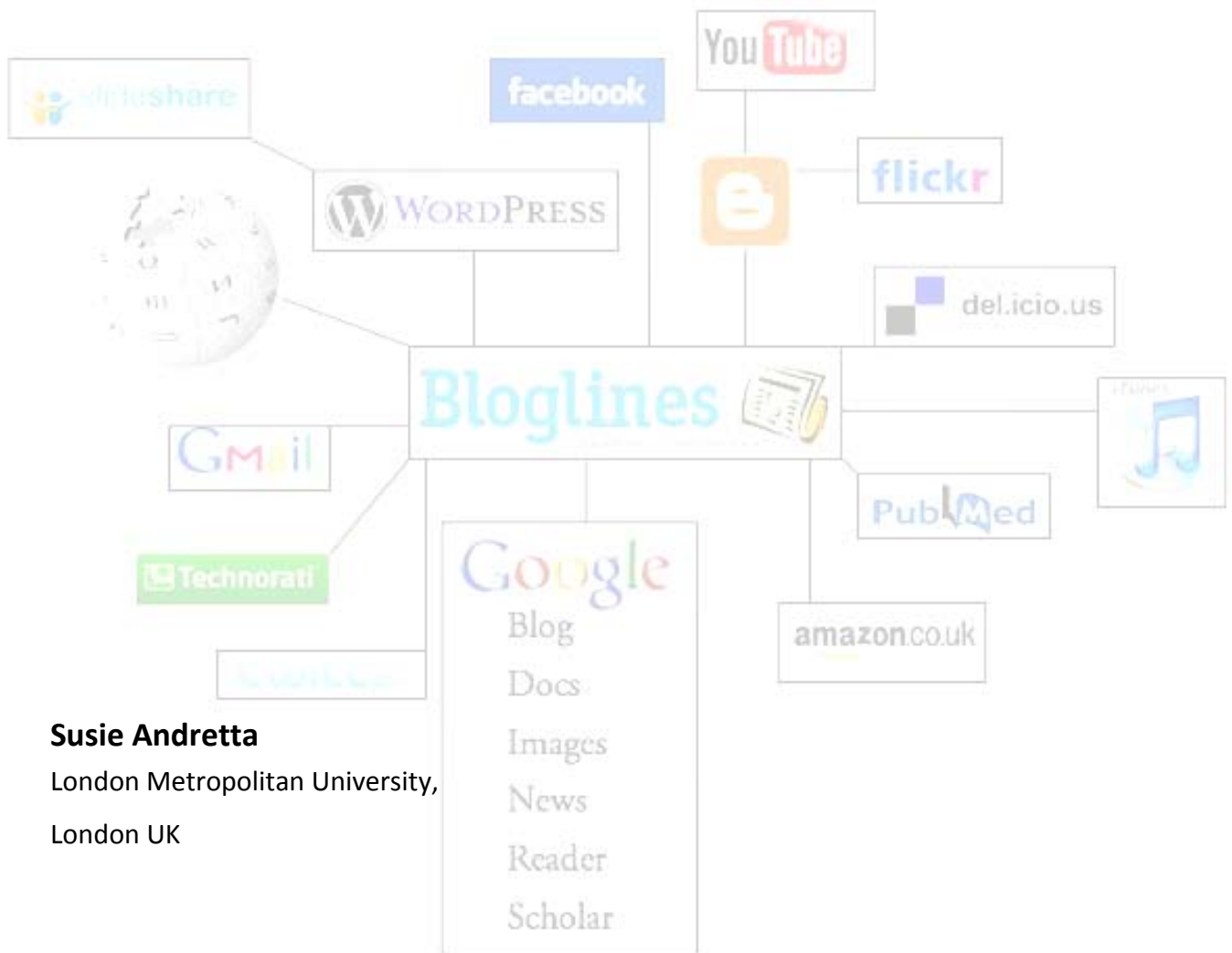# Transliteracy: take a walk on the wild side

Susie Andretta

London Metropolitan University,

London UK

Meeting: **94. Literacy and Reading and Information Literacy**

Abstract

In this paper we explore the concept of 'transliteracy' which according to Professor Thomas offers "a unifying perspective on what it means to be literate in the 21st Century [including] the ability to read, write and interact across a range of platforms, tools and media from signing and orality through handwriting, print, TV, radio and film, to digital social networks". Currently transliteracy is primarily the domain of Communication and Cultural Studies and this paper aims to position transliteracy in the professional domain of 'practising' librarians and within the remit of the library world. It is with this aim in mind that we examine the prefix 'trans' in terms of 'moving across literacies' and also in terms of 'moving beyond

literacy' in order to evaluate the implications emerging from these two manifestations of transliteracy for the information professions and for the 21st Century Library. Examples of transliteracy practice by information professionals will provide evidence that libraries are already meeting the challenges of transliteracy by crossing the divide between printed, digital and virtual worlds to address the constantly changing needs of the learners they support.

Introduction

The literature search on transliteracy revealed two things. First that this term reflects the convergence of a number of academic disciplines such as English, Communication and Cultural Studies and New Media Studies, and secondly, that research on transliteracy is primarily concerned with the interaction between people or learners and social networking technologies.

The aim of this paper is to examine transliteracy from the perspective of the practising information professional. For this purpose we use the definition of transliteracy proposed by Professor Sue Thomas whose project PART (Production and Research in Transliteracy) at DeMonfort University in the UK was inspired by Professor Liu's project on Transliteracies at the University of California, Santa Barbara (Fearn, 2008). Transliteracy promotes a new concept of literacy, where the ability to read and write associated with textual literacy is complemented by fluency in different types of media, what has been described as "multimedia literacy" (Philipson, 2008). Daley's claims about literacy and language are worth exploring at this point as they elaborate on the common perception of literacy and therefore shed some light on the relationship between textual and multimedia literacies that is promoted by transliteracy. First of all, Daley presents a common view of literacy, defined as "the ability to read and write, to understand information, and to express ideas both concretely and abstractly" (Daley, 2003: 33). This description highlights our inherent bias towards textual literacy, reiterated by our definition of language "[..] which enables us to conceptualize ideas, to abstract information, and to receive and share knowledge [..] language means words". Daley argues that print supports linear arguments, while multimedia is a process that fosters interactivity because it can depict multiple viewpoints by enabling "the viewer/reader/user to participate directly in the construction of meaning" (Daley, 2003: 36). Implicit in this description of multimedia is the process of communication as meaning is shared with other viewers/readers/users.

One could be forgiven for jumping to the conclusion that these two types of literacy, the one associated with text and the one associated with multimedia, are incompatible. This, however, is not the case as Lippincott argues that there is "a convergence of literacies" (Lippincott, 2007: 17) as the boundaries between medial literacy, digital literacy, technology literacy and information literacy become blurred when individuals evolve from consumers of information to producers of content. A similar view is presented by the promoters of transliteracy who propose "[..] a change of perspective away from the battles over print versus digital, and a move instead towards a unifying ecology not just of media, but of all literacies relevant to reading, writing, interaction and culture, both past and present" (Thomas, et al., 2007). Two main points should be stressed here as they identify elements of transliteracy that affect the practice of the information professionals examined in the next section. First of all, transliteracy is inclusive and rests on participative practices. For

example, Thomas, et al (2007) explain that our searching behaviour has changed with the emergence of message boards and chat-rooms. While in a pre-Internet environment we consulted sources of information such as encyclopedias, indices and catalogues, we now rely on social networking technologies to "ask each other for advice about health problems, moral dilemmas, or what to cook for dinner. We share those answers, elaborate upon them, and, in so doing, we aggregate them so that others unknown to us can use them" (Thomas, et al., 2007). In addition, transliteracy requires a flexible attitude and a willingness to embrace innovative practices. Here the argument rests on the idea that as current technologies offer new "applications of established processes" (Thomas, et al., 2007) the skills underpinning these processes need to be updated. The information professionals that were interviewed for the purpose of this paper arrive at similar conclusions as they describe the continuous emergence of new social networking technologies associated with transliteracy as the main drive behind the adoption of flexible and participative attitudes.

Transliteracy is an umbrella term encompassing different literacies and multiple communication channels that require active participation with and across a range of platforms, and embracing both linear and non-linear messages. On a personal note this presents a bit of a conundrum as I attempt to convey my reflections on transliteracy using entirely the written medium. To use a visual metaphor as a way of counteracting such a linear exposition, writing a paper on transliteracy is like depicting a three-dimensional reality using a two-dimensional medium. As a result, some of its meaning is inevitably 'lost in transliteration'. It is with this concern in mind that I intend to present a more immersive interpretation of transliteracy in my talk, although for the purpose of this paper the interviews of the information professionals following this introduction are analysed using a necessarily linear narrative.

Transliteracy and the library world

In preparation of this paper I interviewed four information professionals to give an overview of the perception of transliteracy amongst these diverse information professional communities. These include an academic from the Library and Information Science discipline, an academic librarian liaising with academics from Psychiatry and Health Informatics, an outreach librarian from the health sector, and a content manager working in the public sector. The interviews had the following three aims. First, to establish the level of the respondents' awareness of transliteracy and test my original assumption that information professionals have integrated transliteracy in their practice. Secondly, to ascertain the extent to which the respondents are involved in the provision of transliteracy by giving examples of transliteracy practice and the contexts in which this takes place. The definition discussed in the introductory section of this paper was used to give a shared frame of reference so that the respondents could interpret transliteracy as moving across literacies, or expanding beyond literacy, or a combination of the two. And thirdly, the interview focused on the impact of this practice on the interviewees' professional work and on the library where they operate. In case of a lack of transliteracy practice, alternative questions were used to explore the reasons and the challenges that caused unfamiliarity with this concept. All the respondents agreed to forego their anonymity because, owing to the nature of the paper, I intended to disclose their identities to contextualise the examples of transliteracy practice that they could offer, or explore the challenges they faced in the absence of any transliteracy provision. The individual accounts of these four perspectives that are presented here include short professional biographies to contextualise these

respondents' view of transliteracy, followed by a narrative of their level of awareness of transliteracy, examples of transliteracy practice, or an elaboration of the challenges that inhibit this practice, and if applicable, an evaluation of the impact of this provision on their work and the library they operate in.   The claims presented here are supported by extracts from the interviews which are shown in italics.

Michael Stephens – LIS tutor

Michael is an Assistant Professor in the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at Dominican University in River Forest, Illinois where he runs a number of courses on Web 2.0 technologies. His blogging career started in 2003 when he launched 'Tame The Web', a weblog that focuses on "libraries, technology and people – and the fascinating intersection between all three".[1]

When asked whether he had heard of transliteracy, Michael replied that he was not familiar with the term prior to the interview, but that he fully concurred with the definition I sent him as this

Figure 1: Michel and his Mac

resonates with his professional experience of "*moving across platforms [and] media very easily",* and that from now on he would be using the term to describe his professional practice*.* For him libraries must participate in "*the transliteracy functions"* which he describes as *"interactive communcations across multiple levels*". This stand is in contrast with libraries and institutions which use the "*we've always done it this way"* approach to justify the lack of participation in transliteracy initiatives.

Michael's view of transliteracy is reflected in the practice of his students who are classified as *"digital natives [who] are tuned in or plugged into many different ways to communicate [moving] from one [medium] to the other".* However, he acknowledges that there are students who are returning to studying after a career in the library and who, not surprisingly, have a more limited 'comfort zone' when it comes to employing Web 2.0 technologies simply because "*they don't know how to start*".

Michael's experience with transliteracy is evident in his academic work. For example, in 2007 he designed a course on 'Library 2.0 and social networking technology or emerging technologies in libraries' which focuses specifically on the integration of these technologies in the library service. In 2009 Twitter was of particular interest to the class *"[..] because Twitter I think is one of the 'tools' of the day and I think it really illustrates what you are looking at [i.e. transliteracy]. It's very simple to insert a link to a blog or a website or a Youtube video or a flickr photo and you easily are moving across all of that with Twitter [..] I think it's a good way to look at this mechanism from multiple media. We did class work via Twitter, we made decisions about class via Twitter. We had a backchannel during group presentations a couple of weeks ago [..] where the students discussed the presentations as*

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[1] Extract taken from: http://tametheweb.com/about-michael-stephens/ (Accessed: 18 May 2009).

they were happening, and some people said this is great I never thought about this before". Web 2.0 technologies are exploited to their full potential in Michael's courses, and most importantly this approach enhances the students' learning experience: *"the opportunity to experience what that channel can be and the potential of that for sharing learning for asking questions, just for out loud thinking - I think it's incredibly valuable. [..] this is where this wonderful concept comes in, it was teaching them transliteracy and the fact that they can move across channels without getting worried about it".*

Underpinning Michael's academic work is the firm belief that it is his responsibility to equip the students with the right competences in social and communication technologies that will enable them to employ innovative ways of interacting with library users once they become qualified librarians. In this respect Michael fosters a 'can-do' attitude that is associated with the phenomenon of transliteracy: "M*y students should be able to move across various literacies, various channels and use them, and not say 'I've never heard about that before - I don't know how that works' you can figure it out because you have experience with the channels/ literacies/platforms that have come before".* This approach is his way of counteracting the risk of becoming blinkered and oblivious to the opportunities afforded by social networking technologies like Twitter or Facebook. One can see the drive behind such a conviction which has inspired Michael to advocate transliteracy through his publications, where he supports the integration of the core values and mission of the library within this new technological landscape.

Michael warns against seeing the 'new' Web 2.0 technologies as a panacea for all the challenges that libraries face if they are adopted without "careful planning, an environmental scan of the current landscape, and a complete road map for training, roll out, buy in, and evaluation" (Stephens, 2008). Instead, he proposes a number of strategies to address the challenges associated with the rapid changes in the technological landscape. Amongst these strategies Michael advocates the identification of a clear set of priorities to identify the Web 2.0 technologies that are suited to the needs of the organisation as a whole, complemented by the implementation of a Learning 2.0 programme at the organisational level. The crucial element here is that staff at senior level should also participate in the programme, what he describes as *"advocating up",* making sure that the message is positive and supported by evidence of what can be achieved by the library as a result of introducing a participative programme of this type.

To conclude, Michael identifies three areas in which he has observed a clear impact of transliteracy. From a professional perspective he claims that getting into blogging in 2003 was the starting point of his scholarly career which culminated in a Doctorate on 'Modelling the Role of Blogging in Librarianship' and eventually led him to an academic post at the Dominican University. This also marked the beginning of a professional dialogue with the library community about taking full advantage of social networking technologies. He also comments about the impact that his courses have on his students where the experience of Web 2.0 technologies widens their awareness of *"how libraries are addressed in some of these networks [which] helps them understand how people want to use libraries".* This point leads to his claim that transliteracy offers beneficial effects to the library as a whole *"If you have staff who understand transliteracy or practice it you have the potential [..] to be creating services and to be participating in a wider conversation about the library [..] or may be monitoring how the library is discussed on blogs, on Twitter or any of the review sites and*

[by] responding you are moving into any of those channels. In my opinion you are enhancing the stature or the place that the library can be in a community, be that a public library or an academic library etc."

Bernadette Daly Swanson - Academic Librarian

Bernadette is a Reference, Instruction and Outreach Librarian, liaising with the Health Informatics Program at the UC Davis Medical Center (UCDMC) and with the Department of Psychiatry at the University of California (UC), Davis. In the autumn of 2006 she became interested in the virtual world of Second Life® following a presentation by Peter Yellowlees, a faculty member at UCDMC, on his research about Schizophrenia and on a project in Second Life called 'Virtual Hallucinations' (Yellowees and Cook, 2006).[2] Since then she has been working on what libraries and educators are doing in this virtual world and has developed a variety of continuing education classes for UIUC Graduate School of Information Science in Second Life® on camera controls and machinima workflow. For those readers

Figure 2: Bernadette making a video

who are not familiar with this terminology machinima is defined as "animated filmmaking within a real-time virtual 3D environment" (Daly Swanson, 2007: 1) and workflow refers to the various stages of machinima production. On the more mundane side of her professional life she spends her time attending to 'traditional' responsibilities such as answering directional, informational and reference questions (in person, email and chat reference), checking out books for students, or delivering library orientation sessions to inform students about the collections and the licensed health sciences databases used for research available in print and electronic formats, and about employing appropriate bibliographic management software such as Endnote® to support the citation and referencing practices in their academic work.

At the beginning of the interview, Bernadette commented that the question of whether she had come across transliteracy in her professional life was a difficult one to answer "*I felt that my answer didn't fit in because I might be doing some this stuff [i.e. transliteracy] but I am not doing it at work. I have come across the term transliteracy in reading [..] and Second Life [but] that's voluntary [..] no one has ever used the word transliteracy where I work*". The reading Bernadette refers to comes from literature about all aspects of media production which has established a convergence of "*media literacy, information fluency and transliteracy*". Her awareness of transliteracy is embedded in her involvement in the virtual world of Second Life®, although this is not officially recognised as part of her professional remit. She keeps her 'virtual' and 'real' professional practices separate simply because equipment, costly software and time necessary to do this type of multimedia work are not available to library staff "*I'll make the videos at home, I'll put them up on YouTube and use them in my job. If I did that at work, i.e. make videos and upload them, I'd have to go through so many committees and it would just take so long to do it*".

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[2] Yellowlees, P.M. and Cook, J.N. 'Education About Hallucinations Using an Internet Virtual Reality System: A Qualitative Survey'. *Academic Psychiatry,* 2006 Nov-Dec, 30(6): 534-9.

Unlike Michael who is in charge of the development and delivery of his courses, as a librarian Bernadette does not teach credited classes at UC Davis and therefore has no control over the types of sessions she runs or the amount of contact time that she has with the students. Her instruction sessions cover general induction about "*what databases we have and how to be more efficient in searching the literature*".   The same didactic approach to 'library induction' is found in courses with Second Life® content where in one hour long session librarians introduce the students to the resources available. Within this session Bernadette has to introduce the complex issues of citation and copyright practices within a virtual environment: "*The citing of sources and copyright [are important] because [..] if you are taking a picture or capturing a video [the content might belong to] somebody else's work".*   Bernadette argues that in order to fully understand how citation and referencing practices operate in multimedia and virtual environments the students should be given the opportunity of trying this first-hand: *"[I'd like to] have one or two hours with the students, and while they are in the class [they would] make a short video clip and ask themselves what it is that they are doing? What needs to be cited?"* At this point of the interview two important issues were raised in terms of contextualising transliteracy for Bernadette. First, that as a librarian supporting users in a virtual environment she expects to advise them on the practices of copyright and fair use just as a librarian in a pre-Second Life situation would have been expected to train people on how to avoid 'plagiarism', the only difference being that when dealing with different media the copyright issues are much more complex: *"if you are writing a paper and you want to use something that's protected by copyright you cite it very easily. But if you are in a [multimedia] environment [..] it's not cut and dry. Every object has been created by someone and that person holds the copyright. So it raises issues of clearing copyright for every object or creating your own 3D content [..]".* The second point is that Bernadette's practice with Second Life and video production determines her 'take' on transliteracy, where the concerns with copyright and fair use in virtual and multimedia environments offer an interpretation of the citation and referencing rules that differs from that applied to textual information: "*Say you were writing about* Second Life® *and there was a building, you can actually cite the building because it's something created by someone, like an author in a sense. So when people write about the virtual environment, this stuff does become significant".*

Despite the challenge of having to finance her own CPD in media production in preparation for her work in a virtual environment, Bernadette's commitment to Second Life® has led to a number of positive outcomes. First of all she has developed "*a set of skills that I wouldn't have had, had I just been a [traditional] librarian".* Her support work in Second Life® has brought about a new position with liaison activities for the departments of Health Informatics and Psychiatry (RezLibris, nd) and she will be using some of her media skills as a guest lecturer for some of the sessions in the Medical Center's Health Informatics class that is being taught online and in Second Life®. In addition, her expertise in Second

Figure 3: HVXSilverstar (Bernadette's avatar)

Life® has generated a number of invitations to speak at conferences, or participate in panel discussions on Libraries and virtual environments both in the United States and abroad (RezLibris, nd). Bernadette has also been a source of inspiration for two of her colleagues who became professionally involved with this virtual environment after hearing her talk on Second Life®, delivered to the instruction liaison group at UC Davis in January 2007: *"[..] it's like they've been rejuvenated by using Second Life®, and one of them has the California Library Association portion of that. Trying out Second Life®, may be on a small scale but still that's super to recruit new members, and the other woman creates exhibits [..]"*

Bernadette argues that the librarian's professional profile needs to include the role of 'developer' in order for the profession to provide appropriate advice to tutors and students who are experimenting with the virtual learning environment: *"I do feel that we need to get outside our field an awful lot more now than ever before [..] for librarians it is very important to get involved in making media [to] see where some of the issues are".* This, she argues, is crucial if librarians are to avoid being perceived as *"gate keepers".* She has a clear vision of what a transliterate library should look like arguing that it should be a space where staff are motivated and are able to express their creativity and experiment with the relatively new virtual environment of Second Life® *"[..] I would like to think that the transliterate library is more of an environment where we do different things [..] I would take maybe about a third of the first floor of our library and transform it into a lab [..] where we can start to evolve, [..] explore and experiment in media development, content development and do it not just with librarians; so open up the space for other people [..] so you don't get people working in isolation. [I would like] the time, the space and the money to actually set it up [..]"*

Sue Jennings – Health librarian

Sue is an Outreach Librarian for the Lancashire Care NHS (National Health Service) Foundation Trust Library and Information Service. She started a Library Blog[3] in November 2007 to provide current awareness in Mental Health, and to date this resource has had over 270,000 hits. The rationale behind the use of a blog rests on a number of factors: *"There is only one of me, a professional librarian and I had to try and market myself and the library service to the whole of Lancashire, approximately 3,500 staff spread over 100 sites. The library is not sited in a hospital so 'passing trade' wasn't an option and the Trust intranet was very unpopular with the staff and left little scope for development".*

Figure 4: Sue presenting the Lancashirecare blog

Like the other three professionals Sue had not heard of transliteracy, although she finds that such a concept fully reflects the current world of information and her practice at the Library Service of the Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust. For Sue transliteracy offers an opportunity to *"harness new skills and put them into practice"*. Her vision of librarians

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[3] http://lancashirecare.wordpress.com/ (Accessed: 15 October 2008)

echoes the 'can-do' attitude promoted by Michael Stephens as she claims that the profession is *"constantly evolving [..] looking for new ways to find information and present it to the audience [and] to empower and enlighten the users of new technologies"*.
Her conversion to transliteracy was driven partly by her professional experience of the users' preferences for a 'one-stop shop' approach and the need to customise the current awareness service through remote access and RSS feed facilities: *"I needed something I had control over and could update regularly. My experience working in libraries had taught me that users like all the information resources to be located in one space. I wanted to take this a step further and provide a dynamic current awareness service [..] This is why I turned to Wordpress to host the library and information pages. Staff can now access Current Awareness from work or home and can subscribe to regular email updates"*.

The introduction of the blog has brought about a number of transformations. Within the space of eighteen months it has *"changed the culture of how staff find information [..] The blog is interactive and responsive to users needs and wants. It has been the catalyst [for NHS staff] to look further for information to improve their evidence-based practice. It has changed their attitudes to the library service and they now realise how the service can help them in their clinical practice with training, finding literature and keeping up to date"*. The quote from a lead psychiatrist that works at the Trust epitomises the success of the new service and the appreciation of this from NHS staff: *"If all the services in Lancashire Care were like the library we would be world class by now"*.

Professionally the blog has enabled Sue to improve the quality of the library services and extend these in order to address the needs of remote users: *"I need to continually look at how I can deliver information and training to staff. For staff I cannot reach I develop online search training. [I have also] developed online forms and systems to improve response times to requests [..]"*. The immediate impact of this is reflected in the users' requests for information which has trebled since the blog was introduced and this has led to the appointment of additional library staff to cope with surge in the demand for training and literature searches.

There is however one problem that is associated with the employment of transliteracy practices and this is particularly acute in the health sector where concerns for 'security' override any consideration of flexible IT provision and support. Having experienced the 'firewall' mentality myself, when, during a training session with health librarians at an NHS Trust in Bristol I was unable to access an online survey software simply because this resource was deemed unsuitable by the IT department, I fully sympathise with Sue's arguments in favour of improved collaboration between library and IT support staff: *"We need to work more closely with our IT departments [..] I have personally found this the biggest obstacle to growth in an NHS library. Networks are often slow and the IT staff lack empathy with the library service and how this impacts on evidence-based practice, research and information literacy needs of the staff. They still see libraries as places just for books and are sometimes threatened when librarians are IT literate and wanting to try new and innovative ways of delivering information"*. The last part of this quote is quite revealing in that it shows a traditional perception of the library filled with books and a reluctance to accept librarians who are willing to exploit the new technologies in order to improve the services they offer.

Marja Kingma - Collection Manager

Marja is a Collection Manager for Science, Technology and Medicine at the British Library and is responsible for print and e-collections of books, journals and other material in the Science Reading Rooms at the St. Pancras site.

Speaking from a professional perspective, Marja claims that she had not heard of the term transliteracy prior to the interview, although she agrees that the definition I sent her gives an accurate description of this phenomenon. Her professional practice does not involve any transliteracy activities simply because in her current position she is not dealing with users, or concerned with their training. Having said this, Marja is fully conversant with social

Figure 5: Marja at a LIKE meeting

networking technologies and employs these effectively to support her professional network outside her work at the British Library. For example, in February 2009 together with three other information professionals, she co-founded LIKE (London Information and Knowledge Exchange) to provide an informal discussion forum for Library, Information, Knowledge and Communication professionals. LIKE meetings occur face-to-face once a month and are complemented virtually through the use of a Blog and Twitter. In addition, thanks to LinkedIn which is an online professional network claiming over 40 million members[4], LIKE is able to run regular online discussions about a range of topics of interest to its members.[5]

Figure 6: Screen shot of online discussions by LIKE members

The meeting held in May 2009 on "What is the role of storytelling in knowledge sharing?" offers an interesting example of the thinking behind the LIKE group, where all forms of communications, and not just those underpinned by social networking technologies, need to be explored and harnessed by information professionals. This is yet another interpretation of transliteracy that is practised by information professionals outside of their professional remits. At this meeting Marja led the discussion on storytelling and used an example from the British Library where their sound archives were employed to support the claim for the reintroduction of pool frogs (Rees, 2009). The discussion that followed the talk raises a number of implications. First, it illustrates that the collections at the British Library go beyond printed materials and consist of a wide range of media, pointing to its nature as a transliterate

[4] http://learn.linkedin.com/what-is-linkedin/ (Accessed: 15 January 2009).
[5] Details of LIKE and of the URLs for all of these facilities are available at:
http://www.likenews.org.uk/ (Accessed: 20 May 2009)

institution. Secondly, reflections on storytelling and how it can be used within a business scenario, led a LIKE member to conclude that our reluctance to employ such an innovative approach in business inevitably raises the issue of an entrenched bias towards the written medium "Stories in business often follow rigid rules, e.g. CVs and case studies and, while these rules are easy to understand, crafting a compelling story is still a difficult task that requires skills that not everybody has. Stories can be told in many ways apart from written prose, e.g. video, pictures, drama, poetry, humour, cartoons, audio, etc. and different techniques are more appropriate to different kinds of stories and to different situations. [..] However, business seems scared to try anything other than formal prose" (Rees, 2009).

For Marja transliteracy needs to be positioned within a national policy perspective. Her view is inspired by the comments made by Lynne Brindley, the Chief Executive of the British Library in response to the final report on Digital Britain (DCMS, 2009) which envisages "a coherent UK national digital strategy" (Brindley 2009). Here the British Library is seen as playing a pivotal role in the delivery of a Digital Britain by presiding over a number of initiatives including "mass digitisation of content" and the establishment of a "digital literacy for all" initiative (Brindley, 2009).

Marja's vision of a transliterate library complements Brindley's view as it predicts an increased digitisation of library resources and diverse modes of access: "*all libraries will have to provide electronic resources to keep up with developments [and] will need to develop more remote access services. This means that all libraries have to become much more involved in developing transliteracy skills than is the case now*". Despite these changes, Marja argues that the profession will continue to operate the traditional role of information provider alongside that of trainer: "*Librarians will become more like trainers and facilitators, but their traditional task of providing users with information will not disappear altogether*".

Conclusion

The main aim of this paper is to establish whether transliteracy has permeated the world of information professionals and if so how they interpret such a term. The perspectives of the four professionals presented in this paper indicate that only the academic librarian was familiar with the concept of transliteracy before the interview took place. And even in this case her knowledge originates from areas outside of the LIS disciplines, such as virtual and multimedia production environments. However, the lack of familiarity with the terminology does not mean that transliteracy is not integrated in the practice of these information professionals as shown by their testimonials.

While these professionals agree with the definition of transliteracy promoted by the scholars in other disciplines, their implementation of this phenomenon necessarily focuses on different transliteracy functions. Being primarily concerned with the promotion of the library that is geared towards the satisfaction of its users' information needs, all of these professionals interpret transliteracy as a practice that enables the enhancement and the expansion of the services they provide. In this respect they emphasise the shift across diverse media literacies by capitalising on Web 2.0 and virtual technologies, and by establishing new forms of dialogue with the communities they support. Transliteracy for Michael Stephens has a dual purpose as a practice that is fully reflected in the content and the delivery of his courses where Web 2.0 technologies are fully integrated in the curricular

activities by exploiting their interactive nature to establish shared and participative learning and raise the status of the library as a social networking space. Bernadette Daly Swanson situates transliteracy at the other end of the media continuum reflected by the immersive environment of Second Life®, by the image of the library as a 'virtual' space and by the role of the librarian as a producer of multimedia resources with practical expertise in intellectual property and fair use. For Sue Jennings transliteracy is associated with the use of blog technology as this offers multiple benefits of establishing a more dynamic current awareness service and of raising the users' perception of quality and current resources with the ultimate aim of enhancing evidence-based practice in the health sector. And finally, Marja Kingma sees transliteracy as part of a national policy on digital developments where the digitisation of libraries is associated with increased online and remote access to users and with the need to implement a 'digital literacy for all' programme. Whilst transliteracy does not feature in Marja's professional remit, nevertheless she makes full use of social networking technologies to expand and consolidate her informal professional network outside of the sphere of her work.

The view of the traditional library as the space dedicated to the quiet perusal of books is being transformed by transliteracy and exemplified by library services like Mindspot, a perhaps chaotic but at the same time creative user-driven universe where the library is defined by any activity that the users find relevant (Mindspot, nd). Inherent in this transition are the challenges of having to adapt to a constantly changing technological landscape, the multiple literacies that this generates, and the need to establish a multifaceted library profession that can speak the multiple-media languages of its diverse users. There might be some in the information community who feel threatened by these changes as they find themselves pushed outside of their professional comfort zone into what they perceive as a technological wilderness. The experiences of the four professionals presented in this paper should offer some reassurance that there are rewards to be had by taking a walk on the 'wild' side of transliteracy.

Acknowledgments

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