Content

❖ **LQAC webinar series on "AI Horizons: Exploring the Frontiers of Artificial Intelligence", Sabaragamuwa University Library**

The library quality assurance cell has planned to conduct the LQAC webinar series on "AI Horizons: Exploring the Frontiers of Artificial Intelligence" due to the timely importance and requests received from library users. This free and online webinar series is open for anyone who is interested in this topic. This will function as a community development programme and a national service as well. The webinar series includes 6 sessions. The 02nd webinar **"Transforming Education with AI: Potential and Pitfalls"** was conducted by Mr. Kasun Munasinghe, Assistant Librarian, University of Kelaniya on 17th October 2023 from 9.00 am to 12.00 pm via ZOOM.

5. Feature Article

Librarians as Metaliterate Educators: *A New Frontier in Information Literacy*

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Librarians in the metaverse

In the evolving landscape of information literacy, technological advancements, and generation change, the role of the librarian has been changing from the typical custodian of knowledge to a metalitarate educator or a blended librarian or the librarian in the metaverse. This apparent transformation and pedagogical change showcase that mere information literacy requires a holistic approach to address the multifaceted requirements of the contemporary users in the academic domain particularly in techno driven era. Thus, the librarians supposed to be transformed into a techno-savvy meta iterate learners to sustain with the dynamics of change in the context(Tella et al., 2023).

Metaliterarcy

In a way, metaliteracy is an extension of information literacy which encompasses the fundamentals of locating, evaluating, using and validating information. The Greek originated prefix "meta" means "after", "beyond" or "changed"(Hornby, 2013) which gives the meaning to "metaliteracy" as a predominant and self-referential framework that integrates emerging technologies and unifies multiple literacy types (Mackey, T. P., & Jacobson, 2011). The emphasis on one of the key domains; metacognition in metaliteracy challenges the outcome based learning and fundamental skills-based approaches. Instead, metacognition stands for critical self-reflection or thinking about one's own thinking in a connected world of incorporating emerging technologies (Van Wyk, 2023). Thus, metaliteracy functions as an extended version of information literacy further, Mackey & Jacobson, (2011) argues that the role of the traditional librarian should be transformed metaliteracy learners and navigating their users not only to find information but critically think, analyze and generate novel knowledge, ideas, and concepts in a collaborative phenomenon.

Librarians as educators

This transformation of librarianship further emphasizes the role of librarians as educators in reshaping the competencies of users in academic spheres. People still question "*Do we need a librarian when you have Google, Open AI and other modern meta technologies*?". O'Brien et al., (2017) answered this question, by positioning the job description of librarian towards empowering the users as metaliterate learners with four key dimensions of learning: metacognitive, cognitive, affective and behavioral changes. These elements are the components of the learning domain of the metaliteracy framework. Figure 1 depicting three out of the four core components of metaliteracy framework: the learning domains, the learner characteristics and the learner role. These essential elements are reinforced by the goals and learning objectives that constitute the fourth component of the metaliteracy framework (Mackey & Jacobson, 2022).
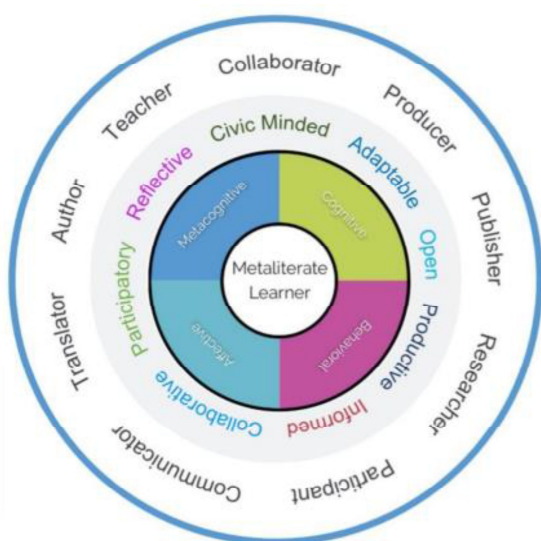

Figure 1: Four core components of metaliteracy
Source: https://metaliteracy.org/ml-in-practice/integrated-metaliterate-learner-figure/

The pivotal role of the librarian undergoes with multifaceted interrelation with diverse disciplines in academia. Similarly, metaliteracy is also not an exclusive domain limited to a particular field. This diverse nature in both librarianship and metealiteracy is conducive to effectively collaborating with other educators and researchers from diverse disciplines. Thereby, the metaliteraters can transcend the boundaries of the conventional disciplines in teaching, learning, research, and assessment.

Libraries initiated to moving with technologies as a respond to the Web 2.0 and industrial revolution 4.0, where the concepts of automation arise. That drives the core competencies of the modern libraries to incorporate with the social media and online research platforms towards online collaborative learning. Triggered by Web 4.0- Internet of Things, and 5.0-intellegent into internet of things, it fosters interactive and participatory user experiences in edge learning, deep learning, decentralized internet. Society moves with technology dynamics to come across with their personal, professional, and pedagogical activities in the meta modernize information ecosystem. Table 1 summaries the main outcome of Web technologies.

Table 1: Main elements of web technologies

Web 1.0	Web 2.0	Web 3.0	Web 4.0	Web 5.0
ONE-WAY INTERNET	SOCIAL INTERACTIVE	PERSONALIZED SEMANTIC WEB	INTERNET OF THINGS	INTELLIGENCE
			CONNECTIVITY	COLLABORATION
			DISTRIBUTED SEARCH	INTERACTIVITY
				PERSONALIZATION
				ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE
				BIG DATA
				AUGMENTED REALITY
				VIRTUAL REALITY
				HYPER-PERSONALIZED RECOMMENDATIONS
				QUANTUM COMPUTING

Source: The author compiled the information available from many sources, 2023

With respect to the enhancement of web technologies and the types of libraries, the role of librarians has to be transformed accordingly to maintain the adaptive social role of a library. In most of the technological challenges meets in the metaverse, can be accomplished with sound metaliteracy and librarians need to be transformed into metaliteracy learners to fulfill this lacuna.

Metaliterate learners

Being metaliterate is inadequate and therefore, the learners should be able to apply the learnt experiences in the real-world scenarios. This is where the entire learning process converges towards life-long learning. This is a fundamental element, educational aspiration, and a pragmatic trajectory to incorporate outcome-based learning in the evolving demands of the real world which is still becoming an ambiguity in the process of producing graduates in the Sri Lankan context. As educators, a real question has been set back to be answered. "*Do we produce the undergraduates to address the demands of the society*?" This is why the librarians should inculcate metaliteracy in their job description to challenge the question "*Do we need librarians instead of Google, Open AI, and technologies*?" or in the metaverse?

However, meta-literacy should not be a factor for the survival of the librarianship but librarianship should be positioned as a metaliterater to stay abreast of the latest trends in literacy competencies. The commitment of library professionals towards professional development should align with metaliteracy. Then they will be recognized as the forefront of metaliteracy education to reshape the next generation as critical thinkers, and lifelong learners in a hyper-personalized, decentralized, highly collaborative world.

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