

**PROFUSION OF  
INFORMATION: GROWING  
CONCERNS AND  
INFORMATION LITERACY  
AS AN AMPLIFIED TOOL  
TO OVERCOME ITS  
ANXIETIES**

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**Abstract**

*The present study explores the complex issue of information excess, a growing challenge in today's data-driven society where the vast volumes of information often hinders users from finding reliable and relevant sources. The research tries to examine the causes of this data and information excess, including cognitive limitations and rapid digital content growth, which leads to decreased productivity and increased stress. By investigating the ways to address these issues through information literacy, this study aims to highlight strategies that improve users' skills in evaluating and managing the information. Emphasizing libraries evolving role, it explores structured programs and AI tools that help users access and utilize information more effectively amidst abundant data. It uses the appraisal of the existing stock of literature through academic databases such as EmeraldInsight, ScienceDirect, J-Gate, etc. to find the relevant content. It included the analysis of the studies focusing on information overload, information literacy, and the role of libraries in promoting information literacy. It examined the effects and consequences of information overload on users and highlights the relevant strategies and tools used to mitigate these challenges. The study finds that both personal cognitive limitations and the exponential increase in available information significantly contribute to information overload. This issue in turn leads to reduced*

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*productivity, poor decision-making, and increased stress. Programs offered by libraries, along with advanced technological tools like AI chat bots, plays vital role in enhancing information literacy. These resources help users develop skills in evaluation, critical analysis, and effective retrieval strategies, thus enabling them to manage and utilize information more efficiently. This study highlights the importance of library led information literacy programs in addressing information overload, offering a unique perspective on integrating AI tools, such as Google Bard, within library services to enhance user support through real-time, and interactive guidance. By presenting a list of tools and programs, this paper provides valuable insights into current practices that empower users to identify and access reliable information in an age of data abundance and misinformation.*

**Keywords**

Information overload, Cognitive limitations, Artificial intelligence Chatbots, Google bard. Information Literacy

**1. Introduction**

The 21<sup>st</sup> century is represented with plenty of free flow of information from numerous sources available both in print and electronic formats. This information is accessible through different sources like libraries, community centers, service providers, media and internet thus helping in providing an ease of access to avail this information (Bundy, 2004). Also, in today's rapidly evolving world, digital technologies have transformed the way we interact with information, making it one of the most valuable resources for personal, professional, and societal progress. The integration of the internet, mobile devices, and digital platforms has led to unprecedented connectivity, enhancing access to education, real-time communication, and global collaboration. However, this transformation in information access also presents challenges. The constant flow of data from diverse sources like traditional media, social media, blogs, and many more other sources of information exposes individuals to overwhelming amounts of information daily. While these information sources empower people with knowledge by providing access to information at fingertips, they complicate the ability to discern useful and relevant bits of data. As a result, volume of information continues to rise and the issue of information abundance becomes critical, raising questions about our capacity to process and utilize the available content meaningfully and eventually leading to the problem of information overload. Also the void between the

plethora of information available and skill set of information users has required them to attain some level of information and technological skill sets to help them in becoming the effective information users, and setting apart from information overload (Ferguson, 2009). The phrase information overload is attributed to the American social scientist Bertram Gross (1964), who used it to refer to the state when the information inputs to any system exceed its information processing capabilities. Although this term has been the most commonly used, the phenomenon has been referred to by other names like information overabundance, infobesity, infoglut, data smog, information pollution, information fatigue, social media fatigue, social media overload, information anxiety, library anxiety, infostress, infoxication, reading overload, communication overload, cognitive overload, and more (Bawden & Robinson, 2020). As the former Google executive chairman Eric Schmidt stated that “the amount of information being created every two days is equivalent to that created from the dawn of civilization until the year 2003” With such a vast amount of information produced on daily basis we are suffering from the problem of information overload (Kumaim et al., 2021a). Personal factors are key contributors to information overload, forming the main context in which it arises. Limitations in areas like cognitive, psychodynamic, and behavioral factors, as well as demographic characteristics, intensify the impact of external factors, making individuals more vulnerable to information overload (Shahrzadi et al., 2024a). A major technological factor in information overload is the rapid online expansion of academic information, driven by fast, automated production and distribution of scientific articles made possible by advances in internet technology. Additionally, having multiple sources of information contributes to this overload. Many individuals also lack the skills to effectively use keywords, keyterms, and tools for managing and filtering information, which exacerbates the issue. By using traditional searching methods and not relying on Boolean operators in their searches adds up in information overload (Kumaim et al., 2021a). For individuals with access to computers, the internet, email, and other resources, additional causes of information overload include the ease of data creation, duplication, and transmission across the internet, which expands the channels for incoming information. Combined with the absence of a method to compare and process diverse types of information, these factors further contribute to the problem of information overload (Kashada et al., 2020). Research on the ‘problem of information overload’ has highlighted various effects on individuals and organizations, such as reduced work

quality, mental and psychological challenges, and heightened stress due to limited information processing capacity. It also negatively affects employee productivity, decision-making quality, and stress levels. Furthermore, considerable time is often spent searching for, sorting, and processing information (Mungly et al., 2012). "Information anxiety, refers to a condition of stress resulting from the inability to access, comprehend, or effectively use essential information. This anxiety may stem from either information overload or lack of information, as well as from poorly organized or presented data, or a limited understanding of one's information environment. A related concept, "library anxiety," was identified in 1986 and has since been further studied. This type of anxiety manifests as a sense of helplessness when starting a library search, often accompanied by feelings of being lost, struggling to navigate, and hesitating to ask library staff for help (Bawden & Robinson, 2009). Exploring the effects of information overload provides valuable insights into its broad implications. First, limited strategies for information search and retrieval prevent individuals from effectively accessing and utilizing the wealth of information available. This restriction not only hampers their decision-making but also limits opportunities for personal and professional development. Additionally, information overload negatively affects both individual and organizational performance, as the constant influx of information can overwhelm individuals, reducing productivity, raising stress levels, and lowering job satisfaction. As a result, organizations experience lower efficiency, reduced innovation, and an overall decline in performance (Shahrzadi et al., 2024b). Users experiencing information overload described feelings of stress, discouragement, disappointment, and confusion. Words such as "stressed," "frustrated," "confused," and "sleepless" were frequently mentioned (Kumaim et al., 2021b).

## **2. Objectives of the Study**

The study outlines the concerns of the Information Overload and the inability of the users to find and search relevant portions of the information for effective use. It also explores how information literacy is useful in different ways for managing the information explosion. The following objectives have been compiled:

- To develop critical thinking and evaluation skills through information literacy for analyzing and identifying misinformation and disinformation.
- To integrate information literacy programs in curriculum to equip learners with skill sets for effective information

retrieval and information management therefore curbing information overload.

- To enhance use of AI tools for proper searching strategy, keyword identification and refinement of useless information.
- To apply information literacy skills to overcome information overload, improve retention and recall, and reduce mental strain caused by excessive information.

### **3. Literature Review**

In an era where digital information access and privacy are paramount, understanding the interplay between information literacy and information rights has become essential. Eltemasi (2024) conducted a study to explore the relationship between information literacy and information rights, specifically examining how individuals with high information literacy recognize and apply these rights. A mixed-method approach was adopted. Quantitative data from Master's and PhD students were gathered through pre- and post-course surveys after a two-month online information literacy program, analyzed using t-tests. The study found that education and experience significantly enhance individuals' understanding and strategic use of information rights. Participants showed increased awareness of online privacy, intellectual property, and ethical information use. As health misinformation spreads on social media, information literacy emerges as a crucial tool in combating it. Using the elaboration likelihood model (ELM), Sun and Dong (2024) examined in what way factors like information literacy, issue involvement, and active social media use affect users' ability to recognize and correct health misinformation, grounded in the elaboration likelihood model (ELM). Survey method was used for data collection, it was found both that issue involvement and information literacy contributes to the intention to correct health misinformation (HMCI), with misinformation recognition mediating the relationship between information literacy and HMCI. Because information literacy is understood differently across various educational settings, it is becoming more important to understand its multiple dimensions. Bruce (1998) conducted a study to examine varying conceptions of information literacy amongst a group of lecturers, librarians, staff developers and learning counsellors. A phenomenographic approach was used to discover their conceptions. Data were gathered from participants, both male and female, through interviews, e-mail discussions and workshops. As an outcome of the analysis, seven categories, or

"faces" of information literacy were discovered. Addressing the ongoing need for information literacy and equitable access to knowledge, recent studies underscore the importance of bridging digital divides and enhancing library instruction. Caffrey et al. (2023) conducted a study to present recently published resources on library instruction and information literacy. This study presents an overview and an annotated bibliography of English-language publications on library instruction and information literacy from 2022, encompassing articles, dissertations, theses, and reports from many sources. The analysis underscores key issues such as information literacy needs, digital divides, and the role of information behavior in enhancing literacy education and access to information resources. Amid growing societal disparities and the digital divide, understanding information behavior has become essential for advancing information literacy and enhancing access to electronic resources. Bothma and Fourie (2024) explored the way enhancing information literacy could reduce social disparities and bridge digital divides by promoting the effective use of electronic resources such as e-dictionaries. Through a scoping review of literature on information literacy, behavior, and lexicography, it introduced the concept of dictionary literacy as a complementary research area. The findings highlighted the importance of integrating dictionary use and lexicographic perspectives into information literacy studies to improve digital learning, information access, and interdisciplinary understanding. As information literacy (IL) becomes increasingly vital for academic success, its role in enhancing students' research skills is gaining attention. Alahi and Yesmin (2024) examined the impact of information literacy (IL) on students' research competency at Noakhali Science and Technology University (NSTU), Bangladesh, using a mixed-method approach. For the quantitative data collection, research-level students (honors final year and master's level) were surveyed, with approximately 225 respondents selected through convenience sampling. The results revealed that students are aware of various aspects of information and research literacy. They also study found a positive correlation between students' information literacy and their research competency.

#### **4. Research Methodology**

The present study focuses on understanding the way information literacy can help people to manage the growing problem of information overload in today's digital world. In this study, literature review was conducted on existing stock of knowledge via

academic databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, Emerald Insight, and J- Gate.

The following search terms were used to identify relevant research articles:

*Information Literacy, Information Overload, AI and Information Literacy, Misinformation and Disinformation, Information Abundance, Data Excess, Information Explosion.*

These search terms helped locate articles focusing on information literacy and exploring ways to manage the problem of information overload. Only peer-reviewed research articles were included in the present study to ensure that the selected papers specifically addressed concerns caused by information overload. After collecting the literature from various sources, the research papers were analyzed through thematic analysis. Each research paper was carefully reviewed to identify relevant and practical strategies for overcoming the concerns caused of information overload.

## **5. Analysis of the Studies consulted**

The present study has analysed 35 research papers dealing with different aspects of Information excess and the challenges it poses to academicians and researchers. The studies were divided into different themes based on the objectives of the present study and the variables taken. It was broadly then curated into relevant areas related with the problems of Information and data abundance followed by the remedial measures provided by the Information Literacy programs especially the new tools offered by the Artificial Intelligence. The following sections will be reflected in these aspects of the study:

### **6. Major Concerns and their remedies by Information Literacy**

In today's information-rich world, developing strong information literacy skills are essential for navigating and understanding complex sources. Information literacy enables individuals to critically assess the credibility of information, make informed decisions, and effectively manage information overload. Libraries play a crucial role in promoting these skills, offering educational programs and advanced tools like AI chatbots to help users refine search strategies, evaluate sources, and engage meaningfully with information.

**6.1 Information literacy as a tool to stop misinformation and disinformation:** The vast availability of information sources has led to an increase in both misinformation and disinformation. Misinformation is false or inaccurate information shared without

harmful intent, while disinformation is the intentional spread of false information meant to deceive. Librarians, with their expertise in information literacy, are particularly well-equipped to distinguish between the two, information literacy enables librarians to critically assess sources, determine the reliability of information, and teach others these vital skills. As educators, librarians play a vital role in helping individuals navigate the complex world of information, fostering a society that can effectively distinguish between accurate and deceptive content. Their educational efforts are typically carried out through a variety of promotional campaigns, library orientations, and classroom instructions (Adewojo et al., 2024). Thus playing the pivotal role in spread of flawed information in a time when misinformation and disinformation are spreading very abruptly.

### **6.2 Information literacy part and parcel of curriculum to fight information overload**

The Danish Electronic Research Library (DEF), a collaborative initiative involving 38 research libraries and the Danish National Library, plays a key role in promoting information literacy skills. It begins with a general introductory session lasting 1 to 2 hours, followed by various courses. These include general information retrieval courses ranging from 2 to 5 hours, advanced courses focused on either general topics or tailored for more advanced students and researchers, specialized courses in information retrieval for specific faculties or fields of study, and ad hoc courses on particular databases or information retrieval tools requested by students or university bodies. At institutions such as the Royal Veterinary and Agricultural University, Denmark's Pharmaceutical University, the University of Southern Denmark, and the Technical University of Denmark, courses in information searching are now integral to credit-bearing compulsory subjects, playing a crucial role in equipping students with information retrieval strategies and ultimately helping to alleviate information overload (Skov & Skaerbak, 2003).

### **6.3 Role of libraries in incorporation of AI Chat bots in providing effective search strategies and refinement of results:**

By incorporating AI chatbots like Google Bard, libraries play a crucial role in delivering timely access to information. This technological innovation allows libraries to provide users with dynamic, immediate support, seamlessly combining AI-generated insights with the expertise of librarians. The integration of Google Bard into library services has the potential to revolutionize the

development of information literacy. Bard's exceptional ability to understand and respond to natural language queries aligns with the conversational and interactive nature of modern internet interactions. As an active partner in creating effective search strategies, Bard engages users in meaningful conversations, helping them refine their searches to yield accurate and relevant results. Google Bard also acts as a virtual mentor, teaching users optimal methods for source evaluation, credibility assessment, and information synthesis from diverse perspectives. Through real-time responses, Bard demonstrates the ability to critically analyze users' queries and guide them in distinguishing trustworthy information while identifying potential biases (Adetayo, 2023). Similarly ChatGPT is highly capable in providing the relevant keywords regarding any topic thus play pivotal role in searching the relevant information.

#### **6.4 Information Literacy as a tool to overcome Attention**

**Deficit trait (ADT):** Attention deficit trait another problem caused by information explosion, in this problem person thinks about the past and future without adequate attention to the present. ADT now epidemic in organizations which results in various problem like distractibility, inner frenzy, and impatience. By imparting information literacy skills organizations and individuals will be able to get rid of ADT.

#### **6.5 Developing critical skills with the help of information literacy to fight with the problem of poor retention and recall:**

Information literacy enhances retention and recall by teaching effective strategies to organize and synthesize information. It helps individuals identify credible and relevant data, reducing cognitive overload and making learning more focused. Techniques like summarization, note-taking, and concept mapping are integral to information literacy, improving memory retention. Evaluating and reprocessing information fosters deeper understanding, making recall easier. By practicing these skills, individuals can retain knowledge more effectively and retrieve it when needed.

#### **6.6 Information literacy as remedy to mental issues caused by**

**information overload:** Information overload can lead to mental health issues such as stress, anxiety, burnout, and decreased focus, as the constant barrage of information overwhelms the brain's capacity to process and prioritize. It can also cause irritability, decision fatigue, and impaired cognitive performance. Information literacy helps combat these issues by teaching

individuals to filter and prioritize essential information, reducing unnecessary input. It encourages the use of structured frameworks, like time management and critical evaluation, to handle data efficiently. This not only minimizes stress but also fosters a clearer, more focused mental state, improving overall mental well-being.

### **6.7 Information literacy cure for the problem of infobesity:**

Infobesity describes the detrimental effects of consuming too much information, akin to the damage caused by overeating unhealthy food. It is associated with information overload and can be managed by limiting intake to well-chosen, high-quality information in moderation, information literacy is helpful in critically analyzing and interpreting the information sources and results in choosing only right sources of information which is cure from the problem of infobesity.

## **7. Findings**

Information literacy helps to recognize and challenge misinformation and disinformation. It gives users the ability to think critically, question what they read, and verify the accuracy of information. Through workshops, orientations, and awareness campaigns, libraries help people build confidence in identifying trustworthy sources and rejecting false or misleading content. Also incorporating information literacy in educational programs has proven highly effective in reducing information overload. When students learn different ways to search, organize, and evaluate information they become more independent, efficient, and capable researchers. Also Libraries are evolving with technology by using AI tools like Google Bard and ChatGPT. These intelligent assistants make it easier for users to find exactly what they're looking for, refine their searches, and eliminate unnecessary or irrelevant information. By acting as conversational mentors, AI tools also help users think more critically about the credibility and value of what they find online. Information literacy supports mental clarity, focus, and overall well-being in an age of information overload. It helps to overcome problems like distraction, stress, and mental fatigue by teaching them different ways to hold their attention and filter what truly matters. Developing these skills improves memory and understanding, making it easier to retain important knowledge. Moreover, by encouraging selective and mindful information consumption, information literacy protects individuals from "infobesity" the overwhelming habit of consuming too much information.

## **7. Conclusion**

The information literacy (IL) is not just an academic skill but a vital life skill for navigating today's fast-paced, information-saturated world. In an era where people are constantly exposed to data, opinions, and content from multiple sources, the ability to think critically and evaluate information has become more important than ever. The key concerns caused by information abundance include the spread of misinformation and disinformation, information anxiety increasing information overload, and the growing issue of infobesity. Other major concerns are attention deficit trait (ADT) caused by constant digital distractions, poor retention and recall of information, and mental health problems such as stress and anxiety resulting from excessive information exposure. These challenges collectively highlight the need for stronger information literacy education and awareness. Information literacy empowers individuals to question what they read, recognize misinformation and disinformation, and make informed, evidence-based decisions. In this digital landscape overflowing with information, IL acts as a compass that guides learners toward accuracy and reliability. It helps them develop the confidence to distinguish between what is useful and what is misleading or irrelevant. When integrated into the educational curriculum, information literacy strengthens students' capacity to search strategically, organize data meaningfully, and manage vast information resources with efficiency. This integration reduces the effects of information overload, which often leads to confusion, stress, and cognitive fatigue among students and professionals alike. Moreover, the use of artificial intelligence tools such as ChatGPT and Google Bard enhances the application of information literacy by supporting smarter search strategies, keyword refinement, and credibility checks. These tools, when used responsibly, become valuable partners in learning, research, and problem-solving. Beyond academic achievement, information literacy also promotes mental well-being. By encouraging thoughtful, mindful, and selective engagement with information, individuals experience greater focus, improved retention and recall, and reduced stress caused by the constant influx of data. Ultimately, fostering information literacy across all levels of education and society contributes to building a community that is informed, balanced, and resilient. It nurtures citizens who are not only capable of managing information but also of using it ethically and intelligently to make positive contributions in a rapidly changing digital world.

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