

**INTERIM REPORT* OF THE
INFORMATION LITERACY MEETING OF EXPERTS
Prague, The Czech Republic
September 20-23, 2003**

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Forty participants from 23 different countries, representing all of the major geographic regions of the world, met in Prague, The Czech Republic, September 20-23, 2003, for the purpose of sharing both theoretical and conceptual, as well as practical experiences and ideas, related to the emerging concept of information literacy. This was the first international meeting of its kind to bring together such a broad and representative cross-section of world experts in the information literacy field.

Information Literacy encompasses knowledge of one's information concerns and needs, and the ability to identify, locate, evaluate, organize, and effectively create, use, and communicate information to address issues or problems at hand. It is a prerequisite for participating effectively in the Information Society, and is part of the basic human right of life long learning.

The Information Literacy Meeting of Experts was organized by the United States National Commission on Library and Information Science (NCLIS) and the National Forum on Information Literacy (NFIL), with the support of UNESCO. The Institute for Information Studies and Librarianship, Charles University, volunteered as the principal Czech host institution for the meeting, which was held at the Krystal Hotel in Prague.

The Expert Group agreed to continue its work as an informal coalition of individuals, representing themselves, rather than their parent institutions or home countries. They see their role as a proactive member of the Civil Society.

At the concluding session of the meeting, the group drafted **The Prague Declaration: "Towards an Information Literate Society,"** that sets forth several key basic principles which they believe underpin the concept of Information Literacy. These principles are:

- The creation of an Information Society is a key to social, cultural, and economic development of nations and communities, institutions and individuals in the 21st century and beyond.

- Information Literacy, which encompasses knowledge of one's information concerns and needs, and the ability to identify, locate, evaluate, organize and effectively create, use, and communicate information to address issues or problems at hand, is a prerequisite for participating effectively in the Information Society, and is part of the basic human right of life long learning.
- Information Literacy, in conjunction with access to essential information and effective use of information and communication technologies, plays a leading role in reducing the inequities within and among countries and peoples, and in promoting tolerance and mutual understanding through information use in multicultural and multilingual contexts.
- Governments should develop strong interdisciplinary programs to promote Information Literacy nationwide as a necessary step in closing the digital divide through the creation of an information literate citizenry, an effective civil society, and a competitive workforce.
- Information Literacy is a concern to all sectors of society and should be tailored by each to its specific needs and context. and
- Information Literacy should be an integral part of Education of All, which can contribute critically to the achievement of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, and respect for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The official version of the Prague Declaration, along with a list of participants at the Prague meeting, appears elsewhere on this webpage, and it is hope that it will be widely disseminated internationally, regionally, nationally, and sub-nationally.

In the context of the foregoing basic principles, the Prague expert group proposed for the urgent consideration of governments, civil society, and the international community the following policy recommendations:

- The September 2003 Prague Conference Report should be studied and its recommendations, strategic plans, and research initiatives implemented expeditiously, as appropriate (the final report will be disseminated December 2003);
- The progress in, and opportunities for, implementation of the above should be assessed by an International Congress on Information Literacy, which could be organized in the first half of 2005; and

- The possibility of inclusion of Information Literacy within the United Nations Literacy Decade (2003-2012) should be considered by the international community.

The expert group also drafted a press news release template which participants and others can utilize to promote and publicize the results of the meeting, as well as a concept paper outlining key considerations that should be taken into account in planning for an International Congress on Information Literacy. This press news release template also appears elsewhere on this webpage.

