The term “information literacy” was coined in 1974 by Paul Zurkowski (1974), and its origins were not specifically located in higher education. Zurkowski used the phrase to describe the “techniques and skills” known by the information literate “for utilizing the wide range of information tools as well as primary sources in molding information solutions to their problems.” In this issue, several of the authors examine and critique various policy documents from different standpoints. A key early and enduring document is the Association of College and Research Libraries Presidential Committee on Information Literacy: Final Report (Association of College and Research Libraries [ACRL], 1989). The committee outlined six principal recommendations: to “reconsider the ways we have organized information institutionally, structured information access, and defined information’s role in our lives at home in the community, and in the work place”; to promote “public awareness of the problems created by information illiteracy”; to develop a national research agenda related to information and its use; to ensure the existence of “a climate conducive to students’ becoming information literate”; to include information literacy concerns in teacher education; and to promote public awareness of the relationship between information literacy and the more general goals of “literacy, productivity, and democracy.”

This wide-ranging statement shows that a clear role was identified for information literacy in the workplace, lifelong learning, and as a civil and civic right. Nevertheless information literacy has come to be primarily identified with education and especially, higher education. As Annemaree Lloyd points out in her article, the locus of information literacy is narrow and reporting focuses on the application of information literacy programs in academic or school libraries. The key role of academic libraries is not hard to understand. Higher education librarians inhabit a world where research is the norm and funding sources to support information literacy
research are often available. Higher education librarians can cooperate with teaching colleagues interested in independent learning and both groups can work together to develop appropriate pedagogies in which information literacy has a key role. The information seeking practices of staff and students are perceived to be particularly interesting and worthy of research but as Annemaree points out, “Everyday activities offer opportunities for people to become stirred into the information landscape.” This issue seeks to refocus information literacy in different directions by reviewing information literacy research outside higher education with a particular interest in policy making.

Although all the authors have their own agendas, recurring themes emerge. As several authors point out, information literacy as a concept loses its authority when it moves outside the information world, which raises the issue of targeting stakeholder groups who are likely to be sympathetic to the concept. As I discovered when directing the Scottish Information Literacy Project, information literacy is widely practiced outside the conventional library and information environment but little recognized as such. Several of the authors critique well-known policy documents, such as the Prague Declaration (2003) and the Alexandria Proclamation (Garner, 2006), although not necessarily from the same standpoint and what information literacy actually is attracts lengthy discussion. The problem of relying on general educational policy documents attracts a lot of attention, mainly from American authors. Although contributors were sought from as wide a spectrum as possible, the lack of an extended discussion on the role of public libraries in promoting information literacy to the wider community is notable. Public libraries can have a key role in promoting information literacy as an employability, personal health management, and life skill (Crawford & Irving, in press).

**Contents of the Issue**

Information literacy has not been chosen as a subject for an issue of *Library Trends* since the 1991 issue, “Toward Information Literacy—Innovative Perspectives for the 1990s” (Huston, 1991). This issue was heavily focused on the higher education sector and in particular what was then known as bibliographic instruction. Since then, research, development, and practitioner activity has moved on and activity, research, and development work around information literacy, is taking place in career choice and management, employability training, skills development, workplace decision making, adult literacies training and community learning and development, scholastic education, lifelong learning, and health and media literacies. Information literacy has matured sufficiently to have become a national and international policy issue, as evidenced by President Obama’s 2009 proclamation declaring October as National Information Literacy Awareness Month.
The articles submitted by the contributors reflect much of this agenda. All the articles are peer reviewed except the first, which is a personal piece by Woody Horton who draws on a wealth of experience to offer a brief history of information literacy, followed by “Woody’s Ten Commandments,” suggesting how advocacy should be carried out. “Linking information literacy to specific long standing goals and reforms” is a particular point to note, not to mention that advocacy is not for the faint hearted. It can usefully be read in conjunction with Sharon Weiner’s “How Information Literacy Becomes Policy,” which offers a more theoretical perspective on advocacy and Christine Irving’s “National Information Literacy Framework (Scotland),” which shows how a program of advocacy was actually carried out. Next comes Annemaree Lloyd who in “Trapped between a Rock and a Hard Place” explores the troubling realities of information literacy activity in the workplace. In the workplace, information literacy is a collective rather than an individual activity, which takes place in unstructured and often subjective conditions and the problems this raises are penetratingly discussed.

Sharon Weiner uses multiple streams framework theory to identify factors that influence policy makers and politicians. Perhaps not surprisingly, she finds that policy makers prefer findings that have practical consequences and that we need to understand the policy process. She examines a number of policy documents in the light of multiple streams framework theory, including California’s Executive Order 2009, in which Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger supported the need for information and communications technologies (ICT) and digital literacy.

Andrew Whitworth carries policy analysis further by critiquing six information literacy policy documents from all over the world. It is interesting to note that apart from big state obvious examples, like the United States, small nations like Finland and Scotland have an important part to play, a theme returned to in Carla Basili’s article. The model Whitworth applies is Christine Bruce’s Six Frames for Information Literacy Education (Bruce, Edwards, & Lupton, 2007), and his conclusions offer ideas for developing policies further. Personal relevance and social impact are important factors and Finland is found to be the best example.

Ola Pilerot and Jenny Lindberg focus on a specific aspect of policy-making texts. They discuss the conceptualization of information literacy policy and ask whether it is excessively focused on Western ideas and values. Policy-making documents they find are static and missionary. They describe this phenomenon as the New Imperialism and a challenge to oral traditions, which overemphasize the importance of digital media.

Stephanie Brasley and Catherine Haras present a U.S. focused perspective, although there are wider lessons for other countries. They point out that information literacy policies have not resulted in government funding or mandates in the United States. They discuss the concept of “public
good” and question whether information literacy really comes into this category. A policy must be unambiguous but information literacy is a variable concept. They review the development of the concept and note that it continues to be library-centric. They discuss whether information literacy should be owned by librarians or educators and point to deficiencies in key educational policy documents, which do not identify a clear role for information literacy. They conclude with a list of detailed recommendations.

Heidi Jacobs and Selinda Berg use the technique of appreciative inquiry to revisit a number of core documents: the Alexandria Proclamation, the Association of College and Research Libraries’ (ACRL’s) Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education, and the American Library Association’s (ALA) Core Values of Librarianship. They take an optimist approach and find that information literacy is full of possibilities to explore rather than problems to be solved.

In an important paper, Carla Basili describes information literacy as still being in a pre-policy phase and offers a lengthy discussion on information literacy indicators. She reviews the work of the Italian based European Network on Information Literacy and one of its research outcomes, the European Observatory on Information Literacy Policies, which has collected information on fifty-four policy initiatives, which show that courses generally predominate with policies being less important. Again, as Andrew Whitworth also shows, small countries have an important role to play.

Christine Irving describes the work of the National Information Literacy Framework (Scotland), which was developed by the former Scottish Information Literacy Project. It aims to link primary, secondary, and higher education with the workplace and lifelong learning and builds on preexisting work. The work of the project drew attention to need for advocacy and the program of practical action described can usefully be read in conjunction with other writers represented here. Findings include the need to link information literacy to the school curriculum and credit and qualification frameworks. Information literacy policy needs to be linked to skills development policy and collecting exemplars of good practice is important.

Finally, Vanessa Domine tackles a different theme, media literacy and its actual and potential role in school education in the United States. She discusses the role of relevant policy documents such as the No Child Left Behind Act and the National Educational Technology Standards (NETS). Much of technological literacy, she points out, takes place outside formalized education and she describes the work of the National Association for Media Literacy Education in promoting media literacy among young people in the United States.

All these articles raise an important question. What can we all do in practice to influence key stakeholders and policy and decision makers out-
outside the conventional library and information world where information literacy is largely ghettoed? Here in Scotland we have a small but significant example. Young Scot, an organization that provides information to young Scots people on such subjects as career advice and health and education has developed the National Youth Information Framework (NYIF) in partnership with the Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC) and the Scottish Government (2010). While Young Scot did get support from information organizations in designing the framework, nevertheless here is an example of an information literacy policy originating outside the information world.

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References

John Crawford was, until retirement, library research officer and university copyright adviser at Glasgow Caledonian University. He was, for five years, the director of the Scottish Information Literacy Project, which was originally begun with the sole aim of developing an information literacy framework linking secondary and tertiary education. This remit was subsequently expanded to include nonacademic areas: early years, employability, the workplace, lifelong learning, and the wider community. This has led him to focus on information literacy outside the academy. He is a trustee of the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) and serves on its council. He is also a member of the CILIP Task and Finish Group on information literacy.