



Pacific Bell/UCLA Initiative for 21st Century Literacies at the UCLA Graduate School of Education & Information Studies

www.newliteracies.gseis.ucla.edu

What is literacy in an age of rapidly changing technologies, where new and unfiltered information is abundantly available? In a world of increasing diversity, where interdependence continues to grow and borders become more transparent? As we step into the new century, these forces are dramatically reshaping how we live our lives, and those of us in the information field need a better understanding of information literacy, visual literacy, media literacy, and cultural literacy.

How can we design information delivery systems to adapt to the needs of different users? Can the same back-end set of information be delivered in different ways to users based upon their technological environment, level of specific domain knowledge, age level, etc.?

The Pacific Bell/UCLA Initiative for 21st Century Literacies is the outcome of a \$1 million gift from Pacific Bell to UCLA's Graduate School of Education & Information Studies (GSE&IS). The gift underwrites a two-year project that will explore the meaning of literacy in the 21st century with a focus on three critical areas:

Educating the User: In order to develop a critical understanding of what materials already exist, GSE&IS faculty will evaluate current knowledge and practice in information, media, visual, cultural and other relevant 21st Century literacies. These frameworks will be assessed to distill and disseminate the most promising practices. Outcomes will include the development of guidelines for what constitutes an information literate student at appropriate mileposts in K-12 and higher education and for what teachers and librarians should know in carrying out their professional work with students and patrons.

Improving the Information System: As the natural complement to educating the user, this project seeks to establish ways of designing adaptive information delivery systems that respond to different user profiles. GSE&IS faculty will examine factors that inhibit efficient and effective use of an information system, and how best to design systems to match the literacy levels, technological capabilities, and other characteristics of the user. Outcomes will include a set of guidelines to influence the work of design professionals and others who develop information systems and materials.

Addressing Policy Issues: Implicit in this project is a wide array of policy issues, including information literacy standards, issues related to the "Digital Divide," and privacy and ownership concerns. Toward the end of the two-year project, GSE&IS faculty will disseminate the results of policy research to both policymakers and the broader public to inform public discussion.

New Technologies, New Literacies: The Pacific Bell/UCLA Summit. The Initiative debuted publicly with a large event on the UCLA campus October 21, 2000. Drawing together more than 300 educators, librarians, and policy makers, the day was spent addressing the dimensions of literacy in the 21st century.