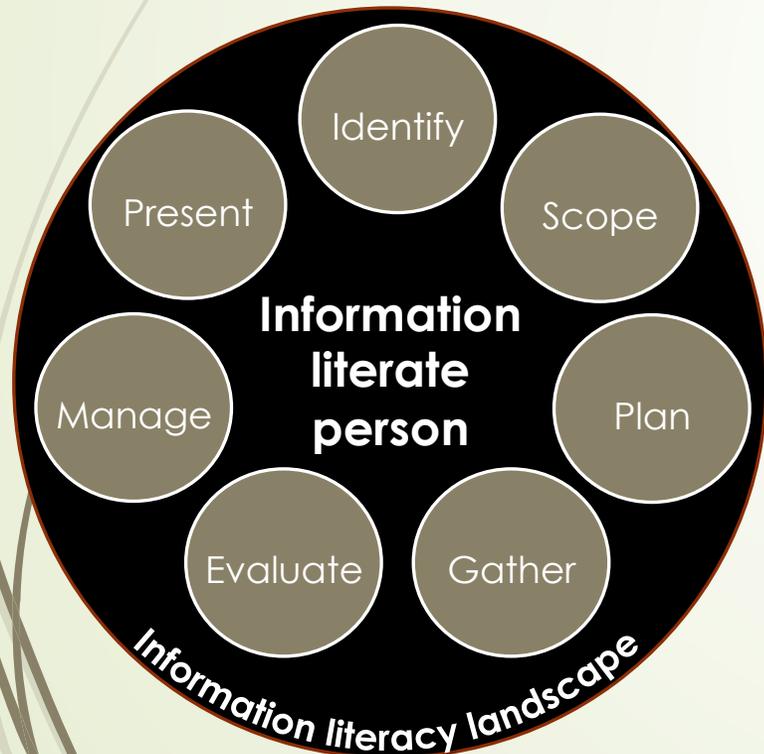


A tale of two models:

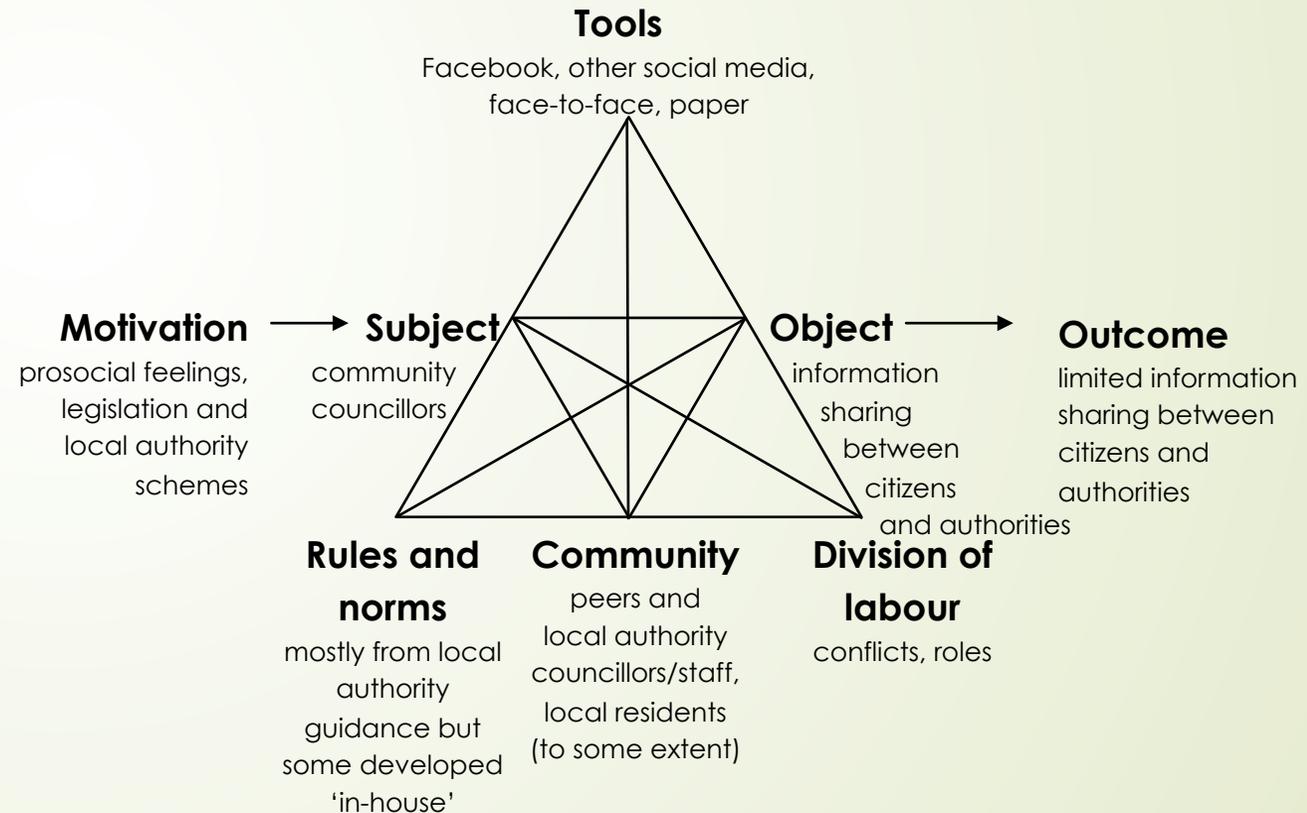
Information Literacy for Democratic Engagement

Evaluating the actions of community representatives as they learn about their roles, and find and share information with citizens

➔ SCONUL information literacy pillars



➔ Activity Theory



Findings

1. Learning about roles

- ▶ generally understand statutory requirement to communicate citizens' opinions to authorities.
- ▶ Also present information in the other direction, and take on quasi-governmental roles

2. Keeping up to date with local issues

- ▶ Some information automatically from councils
- ▶ Other information from citizens, the local press, Facebook, word-of-mouth, surveys and questionnaires, other local organizations

3. Disseminating information to their communities

- ▶ Most use the internet to disseminate information: websites, email, Facebook, newsletters, notice-boards; displays in local libraries and churches; word-of-mouth local press.

4. Where to improve information skills and practices?

- ▶ social media training
- ▶ time management
- ▶ blog-based websites
- ▶ minute-taking
- ▶ digital engagement'
- ▶ how to robustly gauge public opinion
- ▶ analytics

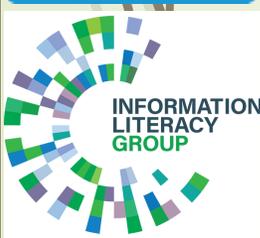
5. Library support

- ▶ Only one local authority policy on library support for community councils was found.
- ▶ PCs/internet access
 - ▶ but very little other support

6. The value of information-literate community councillors

- ▶ 'information skills are critically important'
- ▶ 'you have to be able to know that what you're telling people is correct, therefore if you don't understand or you haven't researched the information, they're not going to get the right answer'.

Such benefits complement the 'political' requirements for information literacy espoused by writers from (Owens, 1976) to present day, e.g. (Smith, [2014](#), [2016a](#))



Implications and impact

Research output

Three publications in preparation

- ▶ Background and history of 'political' information literacy
 - ▶ *Information literacy and lifelong learning for hyperlocal democracy: a literature review (JIL)*
 - ▶ Literature review paper to be submitted to *Journal of Information Literacy*
- ▶ AT (i) as a tool for IL research to present information practices in social contexts, (ii) as a means of highlighting underlying issues within the social environment through identification of contradictions
 - ▶ *Exploring information literacy through the lens of Activity Theory*
 - ▶ ECIL, St Malo, September 2017
 - ▶ Conference paper to be published by Springer
- ▶ Weakness in the IL **Present** pillar: synthesising information needs different skill-sets from preparing and publishing it
 - ▶ *Practices of community representatives in exploiting information channels for citizen engagement*
 - ▶ *Information: interactions and impact* conference, Aberdeen, June 2017
 - ▶ Paper to be submitted to *Journal of Librarianship and Information Studies*

Impact

- ▶ Blogs
 - ▶ Team: www.community-knect.net
 - ▶ ILG: www.informationliteracy.org.uk
- ▶ Twitter: [@community_knect](https://twitter.com/community_knect)
- ▶ Stakeholder report, with recommendations, sent to
 - ▶ Scottish Government
 - ▶ local authorities
 - ▶ Improvement Service
 - ▶ community councils
- ▶ Further work and questions
 - ▶ LIL-DEM (in progress)
 - ▶ MIL-DEM (anticipated)
 - ▶ Public engagement (anticipated)
 - ▶ Value of Facebook as an engagement tool (anticipated)
 - ▶ Is this 'workplace' information literacy?

