

# ***Glossary and further readings***

**The glossary booklet from the Better Informed for Better Health  
and Better Care series**



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For more background and context on Information Literacy, please refer to the **Background** booklet in this series.

For the links between information literacy competence and the Knowledge and Skills Framework, please refer to the **Tables** booklet in this series.

For explanations of unfamiliar terms, please refer to the **Glossary** booklet in this series.

For demonstrations of search tools and techniques referenced in the tables, please visit our information literacy courses at <http://www.infoskills.scot.nhs.uk>.

For further information and resources related to information literacy, please visit the information literacy portal at <http://www.infoliteracy.scot.nhs.uk/home.asp>

## Contents

|                                     |    |
|-------------------------------------|----|
| Glossary.....                       | 4  |
| References and further reading..... | 18 |

## Glossary

### A

#### **AHP**

Allied Health Professional

#### **Alerting service**

A tool included in some web pages used to inform web site users about changes in their favourite information collections or, about newly added documents on a subject they are interested in.

#### **Athens**

Athens is an Access Management System which controls access to all resources held on subscription by NHS Scotland. Users are issued with one username and password, which gives access to all of these resources.

### B

#### **Benchmarking**

The practice of identifying qualitative and quantitative metrics against which the success of an organisation can be measured, often in comparison to competitors and industry standards. Identifying best practices or lessons learned are common by-products of benchmarking.

#### **Best practice**

Methods of performing a process or sub-process that have been identified inside or outside of the organisation and which are validated, codified, diffused, and shared with others to encourage reciprocity and knowledge sharing

#### **Bibliographic Database**

A database containing records that give descriptions of works so that they can be identified and located.

#### **Bibliography**

A list of sources used or referenced in writing a report, creating a webpage etc.

#### **Blog**

An online journal created by a particular person. The owner posts messages to a dedicated website and allows others to add their own comments. Topics often include the owner's daily life or views on politics or a particular subject important to them.

#### **Bookmark**

A method of storing links to individual web page locations on your computer. Bookmark is the term used by Netscape; Favourites is the Internet Explorer term.

#### **Boolean Operators**

A means of combining searches to broaden or narrow search results. Named after George Boole, who developed the logic, Boolean connectors are used in formulating search strategies. The AND

operator narrows a search, the operator OR broadens a search, and the NOT operator narrows a search.

### **Boundary objects**

Objects shared by more than one party, but which are not perceived in the same way by all parties. Because they are shared, they can form the basis for negotiation, community, dialog, hence changes in perception, etc. For example, data on fish in a specific watershed might be used by public fisheries to monitor the health of the population, or by activists to promote a political agenda.

### **Browser**

Software used to view and interact with resources available on the World Wide Web. The most common browsers are Netscape and Internet Explorer.

### **Business process re-engineering (BPR)**

A methodology that aims to reorganise work in order to increase productivity and/or decrease costs. Also known as BPR, it is often a companion or by-product of knowledge management initiatives.

## **C**

### **Citation**

Quoting the name of the author, date of publication, title, publisher and place of publication of an information item. This forms part of the 'evidence' supporting a 'new' information article.

### **Citation sharing tools/Social citations**

Much like social bookmarking, this software, aimed towards academics, allows the user to post a citation for an article found on the internet. These citations can be organised into predefined or new categories defined by the user. This enables academics researching or interested in similar areas to connect and share resources.

### **Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews**

The reviews are presented in two sections :

**Complete reviews** - over 2000 full-text articles reviewing the effects of specific health care interventions. The reviews are highly structured and systematic, with evidence included or excluded on the basis of explicit quality criteria, to minimise bias. Data are often combined statistically (in what is called a meta-analysis) to increase the power of the findings of numerous studies, each too small to produce reliable results individually.

**Protocols** - information about reviews in preparation, including the background, rationale and methods.

### **Cochrane Library**

A collection of databases, published on CD-ROM and the Internet and updated quarterly, containing the Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews (Cochrane Reviews), the Cochrane Central Register of Controlled Trials (Central), the Database of Abstracts of Reviews of Effects (DARE), the Cochrane Methodology Register, the Health Technology Assessment Database (HTA), NHS Economic Evaluation Database, and information about The Cochrane Collaboration.

### **Cohort study**

Involves identification of two groups (cohorts) of patients, one of which receives the treatment of interest, and one which did not, and following these cohorts forward to the outcome.

**Collaboration**

A key principle of KM, given that knowledge sharing--among colleagues and customers within and outside of the organization--is an effective means of transferring "know-how" or tacit knowledge between individuals and therefore critical to competitive advantage.

**Collaborative filtering**

A voluntary practice and method, most common on the Internet, of pooling and ranking informed opinions on a topic. A relatively well-known example is PHOAKS (People Helping One Another Know Stuff) where anyone can post opinions of web resources in Usenet Netnews which PHOAKS reads, classifies, abstracts and tallies automatically.

**Community**

A 'virtual' group of people who share interest in a subject or area of practice and who communicate with one another through an electronic shared space.

**Community of practice (COPs)**

A self-organised, deliberate collaboration of people who share common practices, interests or aims and want to advance their knowledge. When the community proves useful to its members over time, they may formalise their status by adopting a group name and a regular system of information exchange.

**Competitive advantage**

The unique blend of activities, assets, relationships, history, and market conditions that an organization exploits in order to differentiate itself from its competitors, and thus create value.

**Competitive intelligence (CI)**

A process of monitoring the competitive environment to enable senior managers in companies of all sizes to make informed decisions about everything from marketing, R&D, and investing tactics to long-term business strategies.

**Continuing professional development**

The ways in which working people continue to learn and expand their skills so as to stay up to date with new developments and improve their efficiency.

**Copyright**

The exclusive legal rights granted by a government to an author, editor, compiler, composer, playwright, publisher, or distributor to publish, produce, sell, or distribute copies of literary, musical, dramatic, artistic, or other work, within certain limitations (fair use and first sale). Copyright law also governs the right to prepare derivative works, reproduce work or portions of it, and display or perform a work in public.

**Core competencies**

The key functions which an organisation performs best and uses to create sustainable value and wealth.

**Corporate culture**

The values of an organisation, frequently expressed as behaviours which are encouraged and rewarded.

**Corporate instinct**

An organisation's innate intelligence, combined with analytical reasoning which is based on the collective explicit and tacit knowledge and its core competencies.

**Corporate memory**

The practices of an organisation, embodied in its members, which influence its current behaviour. Technologies which enhance corporate memory include (but are not limited to) data-warehouses, document management systems, and expert systems. A complementary concept is "learning to forget", where entities try to retire traditional, but no longer optimal, competitive strategies.

**Cross search tool**

A computer programme which searches multiple information resources simultaneously and returns results from all of the searched resources.

**Current awareness**

The process of keeping up to date with developments in a particular professional or interest area.

**D****Database of Abstracts of Reviews of Effects**

DARE includes structured abstracts of nearly 3000 systematic reviews from around the world, which have been evaluated by reviewers at the Centre for Reviews and Dissemination in the UK. Only reviews which meet minimum quality criteria are included in DARE. Many of these reviews cover topics that have yet to be addressed in Cochrane reviews.

**Data mining**

A type of computer programme which sorts, ranks, and performs calculations on a specified data set to reveal patterns which may not have been evident from listings or summaries

**Data warehouse**

A separate, centralised and integrated information repository organised to facilitate data retrieval and reporting.

**Decision support systems**

Business applications which contain summaries of large amounts of data, filtered and synthesised to support strategic decision-making.

**Delivering for Health**

Delivering for Health – the vision for health in Scotland. Delivering for Health promises a comprehensive health information system built around an Electronic Health Record.

**Deskilling**

A situation where organisations lose critical competencies, corporate memory, or knowledge as a result of attrition, downsizing, automation, lack of learning, or bad management.

**DNS**

Directors of Nursing Service within the NHS Boards

**Document management systems (DMS)**

A series of applications which enable the management of compound documents, including storage/archiving, cataloguing/indexing, search and retrieval, analysis, workflow, routing, aggregation, diffusion, and distribution.

**Dynamic capabilities**

A theory of creating competitive advantage, especially in times of rapid technological change, through identification of new opportunities followed by efficient coordination of internal technical, organisational, and managerial processes for rapid and innovative product delivery.

**E****eHealth**

Used to describe the application of information and communications technology (ICT) built around an Electronic Health Record, to underpin the delivery of integrated care services

**EHR**

Electronic Health Record - Patient centric electronic repository of patient information

**e-Government Unit (eGU)**

The eGU is a unit of the Cabinet Office and is responsible for formulating information technology (IT) strategy and policy, developing common IT components for use across government, promoting best practice across government and delivering citizen-centred online services

**e-journal**

A journal that is made available electronically, in part or in full, on the World Wide Web.

**Early adopter**

A small group of clients/users who are the first to perceive value in new products, services, or ideas, begin to use them, and become adept with them before the majority of eventual clients/users does.

**Enabling technologies**

Software, hardware, or operative method which permits the interaction of separate components.

**Expert systems**

Applications of artificial intelligence techniques to perform decision-making tasks based on a programmed set of rules and logic within specific subject areas.

**Explicit knowledge**

Knowledge and information which is external to the individual and which can be shared easily with others. Sharing may take the form of written manuals or procedures. Films and works of art are also forms of explicit knowledge.

**Export**

The act of downloading information from a database, usually by sending references to an e-mail address or to disk.

**F****Folksonomy**

A folksonomy is a user-generated taxonomy used to categorise and retrieve web content such as webpages, photographs and web links, using open-ended labels called tags.

**Full-text database**

A searchable database that provides the complete text of works online.

**G**

**Gatekeeper**

An individual, unit, or object that acts as accepted, authoritative information channels employed in the information seeking process

**Gateway**

A device that interconnects networks and web sites and directs users of one site to other relevant sites.

**GCS**

Generic Clinical System – a tool kit for the development of specialist clinical applications.

**H**

**Health Informatics**

The knowledge, skills and tools that enable information to be collected, managed, used and shared to support the delivery of healthcare and to promote health and wellbeing

**Homepage**

The main web page for an organisation, person, or interest group. It is usually the first or welcoming page of a Web site.

**Hyperlink**

A highlighted word or image within a web page which, when clicked, takes you to another place within that document or to another site altogether.

**I**

**ICT**

Information and Communications Technology

**Implicit knowledge**

Also known as **Tacit knowledge**. Please see definition

**Information architecture**

An aspect of information systems development commonly referred to within the context of website design, which focuses on organising information and developing a navigational structure.

**Information audit**

A study of the efficiency of flows of information, i.e., blockages, duplicative data collection, failure to coordinate and/or combine, etc.

**Information Governance**

Information Governance is a means of handling information in confidential and secure manner to appropriate ethical, legal and quality standards

**Innovation**

A primary focus of Knowledge Management given that the ability to create new and often unusual solutions/products, is viewed as one of the sole sustaining competitive advantages of the modern organisation

**Instant Messaging**

Instant messaging requires a software package which allows individuals to communicate with one another over an electronic network in relative privacy. Contact or buddy lists are compiled by adding email addresses messenger identities to the programme. When a contact is online, his/her name is shown as available for chat. Clicking an available contact name activates a chat window which has 'panes' to allow you to write messages and read replies

**Intellectual property**

Knowledge, almost exclusively explicit, which is recognised and protected under the laws of copyright, patents, trademarks, and trade secrets.

**Internet**

A network of computer networks which operates world-wide using a common set of communication protocols.

**Internet forum**

An electronic bulletin board which provides a web-space where users post "topics" for others to review and add comments in a linear fashion, one after the other.

**Intranet**

An organisational website, available only to employees of the organisation.

**J****Journal**

A term used to describe publications in which articles are published regularly either weekly, monthly, quarterly, or annually, e.g. Lancet, BMJ, BDJ.

**K****Knowledge broker**

A person who facilitates connections between buyers and sellers. Brokers are guides, and as such contribute to other peoples' success.

**Knowledge buyers**

A person or organisation requesting "commodities" such as insights, judgments, and understanding.

**Knowledge creation**

The process of interactions between explicit and tacit knowledge where ideas form in the minds of individuals ; interaction with others is usually a critical step in developing the ideas.

**Knowledge management**

Knowledge management is concerned with organising, controlling and applying the information accumulated by an organisation, group or individual.

**Knowledge map**

A guide to or inventory of an organisation's internal and external information and knowledge sources. The sources of information include files, web pages (in intranets and extranets), document management systems, recordings of best practices, databases, data warehouses and data marts. Sources of knowledge include subject experts, business rules, workflow charts, procedure manuals, "cookbooks", and diagrams.

**Knowledge market**

A concept developed by Laurence Prusak which sees knowledge in firms behaving like a traditional, tangible commodity which can be exchanged, bought, bartered, found, and generated. The main price mechanism of the knowledge market is reciprocity, the expectation that one will receive valuable knowledge in return for giving it. Additionally, the knowledge may have either present or future value for parties to the transaction

**Knowledge Networks**

Extended communities which operate across organisational boundaries to support effective sharing and management of knowledge within a defined domain. May function as umbrella networks which encompass multiple communities of practice.

**Knowledge repositories**

Collections of knowledge "nuggets", the contents of which are characterised by having the authority of a best practice and having been organised according to a scheme to assist visualisation, manipulation, and navigation.

**Knowledge transfer**

The action and flow by which largely tacit knowledge is transmitted among people.

**Knowledge worker**

A term used to describe a participant in an economy where information and its manipulation are the commodity and the activity

**KSF knowledge and skills framework**

Framework of skills and abilities, intended to support the personal development and career progression of staff within the NHS

**M****Medical Informatics**

Medical Informatics is the study of how information is used and disseminated in health care settings. Medical informatics includes the study of health information systems, computer networks in clinical settings and clinical decision systems

**MEDLINE**

MEDLINE® is the United States' National Library of Medicine's (NLM®) premier bibliographic database and provides information from : Medicine, Nursing, Dentistry, Veterinary medicine, Allied

health and Pre-clinical sciences.

MEDLINE is also the primary source of global information from international literature on biomedicine, including Biology, Environmental science, Marine biology, Plant and animal science, Biophysics and Chemistry as they relate to biomedicine and health care.

The MEDLINE database is the electronic counterpart of Index Medicus®, Index to Dental Literature, and the International Nursing Index

### **MeSH headings**

Terms used by the United States National Library of Medicine to index articles in Index Medicus and MEDLINE. The MeSH system has a tree structure in which broad subject terms branch into a series of progressively narrower subject terms.

### **Meta-analysis**

A way of grouping information or data from a number of different studies to determine an average or common effect. It is aimed at improving the precision of the average data by looking at a greater number of people. It may not be possible for a meta-analysis to be included in a review because data from different studies cannot always be combined

### **Metadata**

Information about information, for example the index of a book. It provides identifying and other details about a resource.

### **MKN**

Managed Knowledge Network – An umbrella network encompassing multiple communities of practice who are engaged in managing knowledge effectively across boundaries for disciplines, organisation and sectors to support patient care in a defined disease.

### **Moderation**

Checking the quality and accuracy of content to be added to a website community.

## **N**

### **NES**

NHS Education for Scotland

### **NHS Scotland e-Library** (<http://www.elib.scot.nhs.uk>)

A national electronic knowledge service which is central to realising the vision of *Exploiting the Power of Knowledge in NHS Scotland*. It provides access for NHS Scotland and partners to :

- Knowledge resources – the published literature of healthcare – journals, books, guidelines, evaluated websites, patient information.
- Tools and services to involve healthcare staff in accessing knowledge and sharing knowledge within communities - e.g. updating services, personalisation, knowledge exchanges.

### **NMAHP**

Nurses, Midwives and Allied Health Professionals

**O****OLAP**

Online Analytical Processing : an application which supports the analysis of multidimensional (or multi category) data. OLAP is intended to help the user synthesise enterprise information through personalised viewing and the analysis of historical and projected data.

**P****Piloting**

Establishes whether a system or a process is effective in a “real world” environment and whether a solution can withstand the rigours of operating in real life situations. Also helps gauge the behaviour and likely acceptance of target customers and users.

**Plagiarism**

The act of misrepresenting as one's own, the ideas, interpretations, words or creations of another. These include published and unpublished documents, designs, music, sounds, images, photographs, computer codes and ideas gained through working in a group. These ideas, interpretations, words or works may be found in print and/or electronic media.

**Podcast**

A podcast is a digital media file, or series of files, distributed over the Internet using syndication feeds. They are intended for playback on portable media players and personal computers

**Portal**

A web page or web site which acts as an entrance to other sites and resources.

**PRINCE2 (Projects in Controlled Environments 2)**

Project management method covering the organisation, management and control of projects. PRINCE2 is the UK Government standard for public sector IT project management. It sets out good practice in risk management and in managing challenges and opportunities in an environment of rapid change.

**Q****QIS**

NHS Quality Improvement Scotland

**R****Randomised controlled trial**

In a randomised trial participants are assigned by chance to receive either an experimental or control treatment. The idea behind the randomised trial is to study the effect of a treatment on groups of people who are the same at the outset, and treated in the same way except for the intervention being studied. Any difference seen between the groups at the end of the trial can be attributed to the treatments given rather than to bias or chance.

**Refereed**

An article or other item is reviewed by appointed person or group especially for a settlement, decision, or an opinion as to its quality.

**Reliability**

The extent to which information is dependable or trustworthy

**RSS (Really Simple Syndication)**

Information gathered electronically from a variety of sources and published to one web display area. The information is regularly and frequently updated and enables those who have registered with the service to receive automatic notification of developments of interest.

**S****SCI**

Scottish Care Information – A major NHSScotland eHealth initiative supporting improvement of Scottish Patients care.

**SCI Gateway**

The national communications gateway supporting electronic referral, booking and discharge and secure transmission of clinical information

**Search engine**

A computer programme which conducts searches on an electronic source such as the Internet, a specific web site, library catalogue or database for records matching a search request.

**Search Strategy**

The plan used for finding information, or more specifically, the search statement devised to find information.

**Second life**

An Internet-based virtual world which allows users to select/create online representations of themselves. These representations (known as “residents”) interact with other virtual “people” in that virtual world.

**SEHD**

Scottish Executive Health Department

**Shared Space**

An electronic workspace provided by NHS Scotland e-Library service where groups and communities share information.

**Situated learning**

An alternative term for apprenticeship which emphasises the contextual, real-life learning and mentoring aspects of knowledge acquisition. This requires absorbing tacit and explicit knowledge.

**Skills Framework for the Information Age (SFIA)**

Provides a common reference model for the identification of the skills needed to develop effective information systems making use of information communications technologies. The SFIA Foundation

is jointly owned by e-skills UK, the British Computer Society, the Institution of Electrical Engineers and the Institute for the Management of Information Systems.

**Social bookmarking and tagging**

An electronic space where users post lists of bookmarks—or favourite websites—for others to search and view. Sharing bookmarks and tags can lead to the creation of virtual groups and networks.

**Social library**

A website which enables visitors to catalogue their collectibles, such as books, records and DVDs. Users can share their collections. Recommendations on particular collections are automatically generated, based on ratings using statistical computation and network theory. Some sites offer a buddy system, as well as virtual checking out of items for borrowing among friends. **Folksonomy** is implemented on most sites.

**Social networking service**

An online service such as Facebook or MySpace which enables the building of networks for communities of people who share interests and activities.

**Specialist e-library**

An electronic resource that provides access to published literature, journals, books, guidelines, websites, on a specialist topic.

**Subject matter expert**

An individual with expertise in a certain subject area. Within the context of KM, this person may be seen as an authority and act as the gatekeeper of knowledge for their particular subject area.

**Synonym**

A word or phrase that is similar in meaning to another word or phrase.

**Synthesis**

Blending newly learned information with an existing knowledge-base. Or, more simply, adding new information to what is already known.

**Systematic review**

A review of a clearly formulated question that uses systematic and explicit methods to identify, select and critically appraise relevant research, and to collect and analyse data from the studies that are included in the review. Statistical methods (meta-analysis) may or may not be used to analyse and summarise the results of the included studies.

**T****Tacit knowledge**

Knowledge or understanding which is stored in an individual's head or embedded within the culture of an organisation. It is not written down and therefore is difficult to share without direct contact and coaching by the individual who holds the knowledge. This is also known as implicit knowledge.

**Tag**

A key word or term associated with a particular piece of information or website. The word itself is hyperlinked to the resource(s) it describes *and* a list of people who used that tag.

**Tag cloud**

A visible representation of the sets of tags used on a website. The font size of the tag relates to the number of resources "attached" to that word.

**Text chat**

Multi-user online chat software (for example Internet Relay Chat (IRC)) which enables real time communication among a group of users. Enables users to join chat rooms and communicate with many people at once, publicly. Users may join pre-existing chat rooms or create a chat room about any topic. Once in a chat room, you may type messages that everyone else in the room can read, as well as respond to messages from others.

**Thesaurus**

A list of words in which each is associated with other words which are similar in meaning to it (synonyms). This can help find articles on a particular topic that may be described in different ways by different authors.

**Truncation**

A method of shortening a search term to enable retrieval of items using variants of the same term, eg. using a search term "psych" with an appropriate truncation symbol (such as \*, ?, or \$) will retrieve material containing the words "psychiatry, psychology, psychiatrist, psychiatrists, psychologist, psychologists, psychiatric".

**U****URL**

Uniform Resource Locator is the address of a resource (webpage, article, etc) available on the Internet.

**V****Validity**

The extent to which information is based on fact or truth

**W****Web 2.0**

Second generation websites which provide interactive facilities for users.

**Wiki**

A piece of software which enables users to create, edit and link webpages. A wiki website is usually created collaboratively and allows members of the creating community to edit its content.

**Wildcard**

Many databases allow a symbol known as a wildcard to be placed within a word to find variants of that word, e.g. wom?n = woman, women.

**World Wide Web**

A network of servers linked together by a common communications system, allowing access to millions of hypertext resources. It is also known as WWW, W3, and the Web.

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