ABSTRACT

Information literate people do not copy: information landscape knowledge is the key for fair use of sources

Laura Ballestra

Information literacy awareness, in an educational and working context, is necessary for delivering good quality work and therefore should be pursued and rewarded.

Teens and young adults are using the Web to participate in a number of activities: creating and consuming online content, sharing media, gaming and obtaining information for learning purposes.

They see all these activities in a similar way, but searching for information is far from entertaining.

School assignments and research papers are supposed to be original and qualitatively relevant, but often this is not the case.

The superficial knowledge of the information seeking process and ease to access large amounts of information, leads students to look for shortcuts, such as copying or plagiarising.

Schools and libraries have to teach students how find and use relevant documents and evaluate properly their works, checking the quality of sources and references.

In an ideal system, students should learn by experience that profound knowledge of the information landscape pays, because using relevant information is the only way to save time and obtain good marks.

The same applies to any adult writing a report, who should understand that, with a long period perspective, they will be rewarded for using the most accurate sources and delivering good quality work.

Copying has to become not only an ethical (and legal) matter, but also an inconvenient choice.