

**Alison Head | Project Information Literacy (<http://projectinfolit.org>) (10.30.18)**  
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**Short bio:**

**Alison J. Head, Ph.D.** is an information scientist and social science researcher. She is the founder and director of Project Information Literacy (PIL), a research institute that studies what it is like to be a student in the digital age. In a series of 10 groundbreaking research studies, PIL has investigated how college students and recent graduates utilize research skills, competencies, and strategies for completing course work and for solving information problems in everyday life. Since 2008, more than 22,000 students have participated in PIL studies. The institutional sample for PIL studies has consisted of 89 public and private colleges and universities and community colleges located in the U.S. In a 2016 *Inside Higher Education* column, Barbara Fister called PIL "hands-down the most important long-term, multi-institutional research project ever launched on how students use information for school and beyond." Alison has a Ph.D. in library and information science from the University of California at Berkeley where she also received her BA. She is a Visiting Scholar at Harvard Graduate School of Education and a Senior Researcher at the metaLAB at Harvard University. In 2017, she was awarded the inaugural S. T. Lectureship in Library Leadership and Innovation from Harvard Library. From 2011 through 2015, Alison was a Fellow and Faculty Associate at the Berkman Klein Center for Internet & Society at Harvard University. Her research about today's students and their information practices began with a small study at Saint Mary's College of California, where she taught new media as the Roy O. Disney Visiting Professor in New Media for 10 years. More about Dr. Head's research and PIL is available at: <http://projectinfolit.org/>

**Long bio:**

**Alison J. Head, Ph.D.** is an information scientist and social science researcher. She is the founder and director of Project Information Literacy (PIL), a research institute that studies what it is like to be a student in the digital age. In a series of groundbreaking research studies, PIL has investigated how college students and recent graduates utilize research skills, competencies, and strategies for completing course work and solving information problems in everyday life. Since 2008, more than 22,000 "early adults" have participated in PIL studies. The institutional sample for PIL studies has consisted of 89 public and private colleges and universities, community colleges located in the U.S. PIL has published 10 open-access reports based on their research studies.

Research findings from PIL studies have informed and influenced academic librarians thinking and practices all over the world from community colleges to large public institutions and private elites. PIL has produced open-access learning tools to share PIL's ongoing research activities. (i.e., videos, infographics, podcasts, "Smart Talk" interviews, and "Practical PIL" page showcasing innovative library projects). Articles about PIL's work have appeared in *The Atlantic Magazine*, *The Huffington Post*, *Pacific Standard Magazine*, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Education Week*, *Inside Higher Education*, *Library Journal*, and *The Seattle Times*. In a 2016, *Inside Higher Education* column, Barbara Fister called PIL "hands-down the most important long-term, multi-institutional research project ever launched on how students use information for school and beyond."

Recent research by PIL is as follows:

- In October 2018, PIL released a comprehensive research effort exploring how U.S. college-age students are accessing, consuming, and engaging with news in the digital era, drawing findings from an online survey administered at a diverse mix of 11 colleges and universities from across the country, yielding a sample of 5,844 students. A computational analysis of Twitter data from survey respondents ( $N = 731$ ) and a larger Twitter panel of more than 135,000 college-age persons provided observational and external comparative data to help frame the survey results. This mixed methods study was conducted in partnership with faculty at Northeastern University and Wellesley College, and sponsored by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation and with a

grant from the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), the largest division of the American Library Association (ALA).

- In January 2016, PIL completed a two-year, large-scale study about recent college graduates and their lifelong learning information-seeking habits. This large-scale study, funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), investigated how recent college graduates at 10 different US colleges and universities conduct purposeful learning for staying adaptive and competitive in the workplace, engaging in community and civic life, and enriching and fulfilling their personal lives.
- In December 2016, PIL released the first of their “Practitioner Series” research efforts. This study investigated the approaches, challenges, and best practices related to planning and designing today’s academic library learning spaces. Qualitative data from 49 interviews conducted academic librarians, architects, and library consultants at the forefront of the same 22 recent library learning space projects on college and university campuses in the US and Canada between 2011 and 2016.
- In 2012, PIL launched “The PIL Passage Studies,” a unique series of in-depth investigations about young adults and the critical information transitions they experience in their lives. In 2012, PIL released its first Passage Study about the information-seeking behavior of college students once they graduate and join the workplace. In 2013, PIL released its first year study about how students make the information transition from high school to college.

Alison has a Ph.D. in library and information science from the University of California at Berkeley where she also received her BA. She is a Visiting Scholar at Harvard Graduate School of Education and a Senior Researcher at the metaLAB at Harvard University. She has been a Visiting Research Scholar at the following universities: University of Nebraska (2016-17), Purdue University (2017-18), and the University of Pittsburgh (2018-19). In 2017, she was awarded the inaugural S. T. Lectureship in Library Leadership and Innovation from Harvard Library. From 2011 through 2015, Alison was a Fellow and Faculty Associate at the Berkman Klein Center for Internet & Society at Harvard University. Her research about today’s students and their information practices began with a small study at Saint Mary’s College of California, where she taught new media as the Roy O. Disney Visiting Professor in New Media for 10 years. More about Dr. Head’s research and PIL is available at: <http://projectinfolit.org/>