



## *JISC RSC Scotland South & West Case Study @ Glasgow School of Art Library*

# infosmART

*making information easy-peasy*

FROM  
GSA LIBRARY

### **InfosmART: Research Skills for Art and Design Students**

InfosmART is a portfolio of online learning modules in information and research skills for the Glasgow School of Art's learning, teaching and research communities. Through a series of easy-to-use and engaging interactive courses, readers learn how to develop and improve their individual research and information handling skills. If our students have ever struggled with writing bibliographies, conducting literature reviews, finding information, or referencing sources, then InfosmART is for them!

### **The Glasgow School of Art**

The Glasgow School of Art is a Higher Education institution, and one of the pre-eminent art schools in the UK, with many of its graduates achieving international acclaim in the arts. It is one of only three Small Specialist Institutions within Scotland, with undergraduate, taught postgraduate, and research programmes delivered across architecture, fine art, design, digital design, and historical and critical studies. The Library forms part of learning resources, which also includes e-learning, archives, and collections.

## **The Challenge**

Experience within the Library over a number of years had demonstrated that GSA students experience difficulty in searching for information effectively, evaluating it critically, and then using it legally. This remained true across all levels of study, from undergraduate to PhD level. For many art and design students, information skills do not come as second nature – many find academic writing problematic. GSA students operate within visual worlds, and find text-heavy resources alien and intimidating. Feedback from academic staff confirmed that they had observed the same difficulties, and that there was a real need for information skills training within the student body.

## **What is InfosmART?**

InfosmART comprises an easy-to-follow 4-step programme.



By following this 4-step programme, readers learn how to:

- Recognise their information need, find keywords that describe it, and select sources to satisfy it.
- Search the sources they have selected quickly and effectively.
- Evaluate the information they find for authority, currency, relevance, accuracy and other criteria.
- Cite the information they find as references and bibliographies in their own work.

All InfosmART modules are self-directed, so readers can follow each module from start to finish, or dip in and out when they need specific information. All content is written in easy-to-understand non-threatening language and is designed for readers to work through at their own pace. The InfosmART homepage presents a quick 'first-aid' assessment, where learners can acquire a personal InfosmART prescription, indicating the content they could concentrate on.

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## Welcome to InfosmART: Find



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In the first module of InfosmART we learnt how to select our sources, create a resource mix, and define keywords to help us search for what we need. This second module will help us learn how to search the different information systems available to us.

Each module encourages self-directed learning with interactive elements such as Q&As and thinking exercises – these provide the reader with opportunities to think about different scenarios and how they could apply what they have learnt. E-assessment components, although not formally assessed or graded, allow learners to test their own knowledge, benchmark their information skills, and reinforce what they have learnt. Downloadable certificates of learning ensure that students can record their attainments within their personal development portfolios.

## 5 Journals



Reading journals in your subject area is a great way to...

- a) Impress people at dinner parties
- b) Look intellectual
- c) Maintain current awareness of new activity and research in the field



That's correct! Reading journals in your subject area is a great way to maintain current awareness of new activity and research in the field.

Check your answer

An attractive, clean and elegant look and feel has been created, and is now carried across all the library's training and support materials. Downloadable materials include posters, postcards, bookmarks, tent cards, crib sheets, desk aids, and survival kits. InfosmART is integrated into the GSA's Blackboard virtual learning environment, and is available across the institution on a 24/7 basis. CourseGenie software enabled us to incorporate web 2.0 applications such as social bookmarking, blogs and RSS feeds. Furthermore, the course is supported by a dedicated blog which reports on new information issues and developments. Learners can subscribe to this blog via email or RSS to keep their newly acquired skills up-to-date.

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Posts

All Comments

Wednesday, 13 January 2010

## SCONUL Focus

An article on the development of the InfosmART project appears in the current issue of SCONUL Focus.

Link: <http://www.sconul.ac.uk/publications/newsletter/47/>

Posted by Glasgow School of Art Library at 9:59 AM

Labels: [project background](#)

## Plagiarism Advice from Ofqual



The Office of the Qualifications and Examinations Regulator has just released some news plagiarism guides for students and

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## Benefits and Impact

InfosmART is designed to have very practical applications for our students, helping them to find and present information for:

- Critical review of sources
- Extended essays
- Undergraduate and Masters dissertations
- PhD theses
- Studio projects
- And any other piece of work that requires them to find and use information!

Furthermore, the ability to undertake self-directed research is increasingly sought after by employers. A large proportion of GSA graduates are self-employed, where an ability to apply their own information skills is key. InfosmART aims to equip all students with the cross-transferable skills that are attractive to employers in an increasingly competitive workplace.

*"Research, referencing and academic conventions are of great concern to students. I've used InfosmART as a key resource when working with students in groups and one-to-one; it cuts through the jargon very well, and is an extremely user-friendly resource. The modules on finding and evaluating sources are invaluable – they offer practical support and guidance, but also offer a fuller perspective on research as a process and how referencing and its conventions fit into this process."*

Stephen McCormick, Learning Support Tutor

## **Links**

GSA Learning Resources <http://www2.gsa.ac.uk/library>

InfosmART Blog <http://gsainfosmart.blogspot.com>