1. Welcome to the World of Information

What comes to mind for you when you think about information? The Internet and your favorite website? Books that you have read? Text messages you’ve sent and received? Pictures you’ve shared on Instagram and Facebook?

If you thought of any of those, you’d be right. They’re all types of information – and they’re just the beginning. Here are a few other kinds of information.

When we think of books or journals or magazines, whether they're in print or digital format, we’re usually referring to text.

Information can also take the form of:
• Images and graphics, like a .jpg, or a painting, or a chart
• Sounds, like a heartbeat or symphony
• Data and statistics, like polling data or a country’s aggregate Gross Domestic Product
• Items you can touch, like a natural object or a human artifact

When enough people believe information has value, it tends to be collected, organized in some way, and made available to other people, who can then build on that information and add to the creation of knowledge.

Traditionally, universities and libraries have played a dominant role in the collection and organization of information. Attending a college or university and becoming a savvy library user have long been the gateway to accessing the world of information.

Until very recently the big questions with information were how to produce more, how to collect and organize it, and how to increase people’s access so they can build on what we already know.

Then the world exploded with all different kinds of information.

Today we have so much access to so much information, the challenge has shifted:

How do we sift through all the information that’s out there? How do we figure out what kind of information we want to look for? Find what's useful and what's reliable? And then responsibly shape that information into patterns that serve our goals?

In short, how do we become information literate?
Helping you become *information literate* is the goal of this project. In your College courses you'll be asked to find, evaluate, and apply information. You'll get a big head start by learning the material presented here.

Each of the sections presented here focuses on some aspect of information literacy. When you finish a section and complete the quiz with 80 percent or more correct answers, the next section will open up and you can continue.

You can return to any section as many times as you like, and you can experiment online to gain more experience.

If you have any **technical** trouble with the course format, consult the Getting Started tab in the left navigation menu.

If at any point you want more guidance or to learn more about the **content** in a section:

Get in touch with a research librarian and ask for some help. You can visit the Research Desk at Swem Library in person, or contact them by email, phone, chat, and text.

On campus, you can ask your professor. Visit during office hours to discuss the course material and your assignment.