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## Digital Literacy

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### Introduction

In simple words the concept 'digital' can be defined as electronic technology that generates, stores and processes data. Similarly the concept 'digital literacy' can be best defined as the ability of individuals to comprehend and utilize digital technologies require both cognitive as well as technical skills.

One cannot imagine a day without the use of digital technology. Communicating through cellphones, interacting on social media, attending online tuitions, enjoying online shopping, browsing internet for searching literature reviews, texting messages, e-mails, and what not. All these shows how technology is being integrated in various fields of individual's activities.

American Library association's Digital Literacy task force defines digital literacy as the ability to use information and communication technologies to find, evaluate, create and communicate information, requiring both cognitive and technological skills. Whereas Microsoft defines digital literacy as the ability to navigate our digital world using reading, writing, technical and critical thinking.

### Digital technology in Education

We are experiencing that the field of education is not remained untouched by digital technology. Since students now a days are depending more upon internet as a primary source of information. It is becoming easy for the students to gather relevant information from varied sources (websites, e-books, uploaded research works, self-learning material, etc.) to complete their educational activities (project works, assignments, thesis writing, literature reviews for research works, etc.). Ultimately students are totally dependent on the digital technology for any form of information they want to seek, may it be a simple task of finding the meaning of a new term they have come across while reading, or may it be a complex task of writing thesis of the research work.

Nation is moving towards a technology dependent world. Hence it is now becoming mandatory to implement digital technology in education. Initiation can be brought about from having computers in the classrooms, using educational software to transact curriculum and course materials. Students should be given training in digital literacy skills, like how to verify relevant sources on internet, searching websites and how to maintain cyber security while online.

It can be quoted without hesitation that the covid-19 pandemic has pushed education into a more digital and online field where in teachers and students were interacting via online mode. This has helped the students as well as the senior teachers to develop digital competencies in education system. As direct interaction was prohibited during pandemic, academic institutions continued their interactions via online meeting platforms.

Problems faced during pandemic has allowed the schools to prepare their students and teachers for digital education and enhance their digital literacy skills.

## Digital Skills Needed For Students

Digital literacy is far beyond the concept of digital knowledge. It requires skills and abilities that enable an individual to access, manage, comprehend, integrate communicate, assess and produce information effectively and securely using digital technology. At its lowest level digital literacy demands basic usage, application, development and transformation. But when we go to the higher orders, it is experienced that more skills are required for using digital technology, such as

**Critical thinking:** when knowledge is available in vast amount, it requires searching, evaluating, applying and producing information intelligently.

**Communication skills:** when the individual is facing virtual environments, effective communication is a must. It aids in expressing opinions and ideas clearly, asking relevant questions to clear the doubts maintaining respect and dignity of the person sitting on the other side of the virtual platforms.

**Practical skills:** utilization of digital knowledge demands the efficiency of technical knowledge, one should be familiar with the use, access, manipulation and creation of software. With the constant evolution of digital technologies, it is needed that one should keep their knowledge updated with the recent advancements of applications and availability of applications of various software.

**Digital etiquette:** following digital etiquette and understanding online norms and behaviors in an online setting is also equally important.

**Privacy and security:** one should be able to maintain privacy while on online digital platform simultaneously taking appropriate security measures.

## Conclusions

As technology is becoming cheaper and easily available, almost all the spheres of life are demanding digital literacy. It empowers students to proficiently use computers, software and other analytical tools to access information, communicate, navigate and develop other related digital skills which are essential for their academic and professional success and endeavors. Digital literacy in schools should start with the learning of basic concepts such as input and output, operating the applications, manipulating hardware devices and how to use them, etc., this knowledge will provide basic transferable skills that can be applied to new and emerging technologies.

Thus digital literacy is necessary for using number of digital platforms on social media also like search engines, Facebook, twitter, etc.,. This is helping people in staying connected with each other's and even buying and selling goods and services. Knowledge of digital literacy can also help the individuals from becoming victims of online frauds like photo manipulation, e-mail frauds and phishing, etc., which is often costing digital illiterate victims money and hence many trauma and suicide cases are being reported in this connection. Those using technology and the internet to commit these manipulations and fraudulent acts possess the digital literacy abilities to fool victims by understanding the technical trends and consistencies; it becomes important to be digitally literate to always think one step ahead when using the digital platforms in any sector of human endeavor.

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