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Digital and information literacy framework

Katharine Reedy and Robin Goodfellow

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Katharine Reedy and Robin Goodfellow
Open University
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Katharine.Reedy@open.ac.uk

Robin.Goodfellow@open.ac.uk

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Digital and information literacy framework

Getting started with the Digital and information literacy (DIL) framework

What is digital literacy and how is it different from information literacy?

Digital literacy includes the ability to find and use information (otherwise known as information literacy) but goes beyond this to encompass communication, collaboration and teamwork, social awareness in the digital environment, understanding of e-safety and creation of new information. Both digital and information literacy are underpinned by critical thinking and evaluation.

What does the DIL framework cover and how is it structured?

For the purposes of the DIL framework, digital literacy refers to the skills, competences, and dispositions of OU students using digital technologies to achieve personal, study, and work-related goals. The framework describes five 'stages of development' of digital literacy skills, competences and dispositions and maps them against the 'levels' of OU study.

The Framework is divided into five competence areas:

- Understand and engage in digital practices
- Find information
- Critically evaluate information, online interactions and online tools
- Manage and communicate information
- Collaborate and share digital content

Competences for each of the areas identified above have been divided into **levels** and **stages**:

- Access / level 0
- Foundation digital practice stage / level 1
- Interactive and co-operative digital practice stage / level 2
- Personalised and collaborative digital practice stage / level 3
- Professional and digital identity stage / masters

These determine the complexity or depth of learning involved and map to the levels of OU study.

What is the DIL Framework for and who is it aimed at?

The purpose is to provide a common reference point for module, programme, and qualification teams to use in determining markers of progression in digital literacy that can be integrated with other learning outcomes and student attributes.

What do we mean by levels and stages?

The 'Stages' of the DIL Framework represent progression in the sophistication of students' engagement with the digital, both within and outside their OU studies. The 'Levels' attempt to capture what students should be able to do by the end of each level of OU study. Stages correspond only very broadly to levels; there may be considerable areas of overlap, and differences in different subject areas. For this reason we recommend flexibility in the way the framework is applied to any scheme for progression.

How do the stages of the DIL Framework relate to the stages of the Qualifications Framework?

The DIL stages can be overlaid on the [Qualifications framework](#), but a prescriptive approach may not be helpful in every situation. The DIL Framework is designed to be interpreted flexibly.

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How can the Framework be used by qualification and module teams?

The DIL Framework enables appropriate learning outcomes for digital and information literacy to be integrated into qualification pathways.

Developing digital and information literacy skills can make a strong contribution to employability, for example, by developing collaborative and team-working skills, effective research and information handling skills, and communication / self-presentation in a virtual environment

What supporting materials are available?

The [Being digital](#) site contains a growing collection of bite-size learning materials covering the skills in the DIL Framework.

A [self-assessment checklist](#) is available from Being digital, to help students focus on which skills they need to develop.

Why aren't basic ICT skills covered?

The framework pre-supposes that students have, or will acquire, the functional ICT skills to use a computer and carry out basic functions such as using a word-processing package, sending emails and doing simple searches using a search engine etc. at Access stage/Level 0.

What is the thinking behind the DIL Framework?

The framework builds on the existing OU Information Literacy Levels Framework. It also draws on other relevant frameworks, both internal and external. A range of stakeholders from across the OU have been involved in developing the Framework.

Reflecting on skills

Students should be encouraged to record and articulate the value of their digital and information literacy skills and to link them to their personal and / or career goals.

Contacts

For further information, please email:

Katharine Reedy Katharine.Reedy@open.ac.uk

Jo Parker Jo.Parker@open.ac.uk

Natasha Huckle Natasha.Huckle@open.ac.uk

Robin Goodfellow Robin.Goodfellow@open.ac.uk

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View all

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Masters
Understand and engage in digital practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Describe own 'digital footprint' - the tools and sites that show own presence as an internet user. ▶ Demonstrate basic use of a range of tools and websites for finding and recording information online: internet browsers, search engines, copy/paste and download functions. ▶ Successfully follow instructions for accessing and using generic tools and sites for information relevant to OU study. ▶ Demonstrate the successful use of OU VLE tools that are required for study at this level. ▶ Describe the ways in which mobile communication devices might be used for personal study purposes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Contribute online information and resources from outside into the activities of the OU study community. ▶ Articulate the requirements of online group work for learning and demonstrate proactivity in meeting those requirements. ▶ Distinguish between different online communication tools in terms of their usefulness for enabling teamwork and collaboration. ▶ Demonstrate the ability to produce subject-related knowledge artefacts using digital tools and resources. ▶ Articulate principles of legal and ethical behaviour in online contexts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Apply digital technologies to managing, recording and reflecting on sustained learning in the subject area. ▶ Demonstrate the ability to create a personal learning environment incorporating elements of OU digital study practices and external applications and environments. ▶ Demonstrate a leadership role in collaborative learning activities in your OU studies. ▶ Engage in the creation, use, sharing and repurposing of subject-related knowledge artefacts within the OU study community. ▶ Demonstrate effective use of social and/or professional online networks outside the OU study community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Articulate the characteristics of digital scholarship in the relevant subject and/or professional area. ▶ Apply digital techniques to conduct and share research. ▶ Give evidence of proactive participation in academic and/or professional online networks outside the OU study community.

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	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Masters
Understand and engage in digital practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Identify instances of digital technologies being used for the creating and sharing of knowledge in a specific subject area. ▶ Demonstrate the ability to integrate time spent online into a study schedule. ▶ Successfully carry out the task of finding a person online, (e.g. a discipline expert) and establishing contact details. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Demonstrate the ability to use a variety of online contacts and social networks to find out information. 		

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Find information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Identify key sources of information in the subject area or context. ▶ Articulate the key characteristics of different information types (e.g. print / electronic, primary / secondary, freely available / subscriber only / invisible web) as relevant to the subject or context. ▶ Identify the 'knowledge gap' and the information needed to fill it, in relation to a particular subject-related search task. ▶ Demonstrate the ability to plan and adapt a search. e.g. by broadening or narrowing, adding or removing keywords, or using different ones. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Identify a range of key sources of information in the subject area. ▶ Successfully carry out instructions for using a range of formats of information (e.g. bibliographic records, full text, abstracts). ▶ Demonstrate the ability to independently select appropriate resources for a task. ▶ Apply the principles of effective searching. ▶ Distinguish instances of search features that are common to different databases and the web. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Demonstrate the use of a wide range of sources appropriate to the discipline. ▶ Demonstrate independent selection of appropriate resources for the task. ▶ Give evidence of the use of sources of current information (including people) for keeping up-to-date. ▶ Identify and frame problems or research questions and select appropriate information to address these. ▶ Articulate and independently carry out strategy for finding information needed, whether from a person or an online resource. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Articulate the characteristic ways research information is generated and disseminated. ▶ Demonstrate the ability to search independently and fluently across a comprehensive range of information sources in any medium, including specialised information such as archives, data sets, special collections, colleagues and contacts in research networks. ▶ Demonstrate a critical and systematic approach to keeping up-to-date using the most appropriate tools and resources, e.g. RSS, mailing lists. ▶ Articulate the way that Library databases work (e.g. fields, records, indexing) and apply this knowledge to improve searches.

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	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Masters
Find information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Successfully plan and carry out a search in a database on a pre-defined topic using pre-defined resources. ▶ Successfully find a journal article or book from a reference. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Demonstrate the ability to use a range of database functionality (e.g. truncation, phrase searching, date limits, combining search terms, sorting, saving, exporting) within a single database and to interpret results (e.g. bibliographic or full text). ▶ Independently and successfully carry out a simple subject search within a single database. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Produce an independently conducted thorough literature search in a specific subject area, making effective use of advanced search techniques such as citation searching. ▶ Identify the most effective ways to use research outputs (e.g. reports, conference proceedings, journal articles) to create impact.

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	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Masters
Critically evaluate information, online interactions and online tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Identify and apply appropriate quality criteria to evaluate pre-defined information, including personal contacts. ▶ Identify and apply appropriate quality criteria in a broad sense to carry out initial filtering of material from searches. ▶ Contribute a comment to an online discussion (e.g. forum, blog, wiki). ▶ Distinguish between instances of online tools on the basis of their relevance to the study context. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Apply appropriate quality criteria to evaluate a range of resources (e.g. books, articles, websites, personal contacts) effectively. ▶ Apply appropriate quality criteria to filter results. ▶ Contribute useful feedback on others' contributions to an online interaction. ▶ Apply appropriate criteria to evaluating instances of online tools for their relevance to the study context. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Use appropriate quality criteria to critically evaluate information from any source to determine authority, bias, etc. ▶ Use appropriate quality criteria to filter results from a given search output, and to focus on the most relevant information within documents. ▶ Engage in critical appraisal of others' contributions in an online interaction. ▶ Demonstrate the ability to evaluate online tools in any context. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Engage in critical appraisal, including judgements on reliability and validity, of own work and the work of others. ▶ Define clearly the scope of a research question and apply relevant criteria to filter large quantities of information related to this question. ▶ Articulate the advantages and disadvantages of peer review practices. ▶ Assess whether an instance of online collaborative working has been effective and appropriate. ▶ Apply critical criteria to the evaluation of unfamiliar online tools.

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	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Masters
Manage and communicate information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Articulate what is meant by plagiarism. ▶ Articulate the rationale for referencing, be able to create a reference, and be aware that references can be created in different styles. ▶ Demonstrate the ability to accurately record search results. ▶ Demonstrate the ability to select appropriate references to produce a reference list and in-text citations as required for assignments. ▶ Identify stylistic aspects of writing in different online and offline contexts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Produce an accurate list of references for common sources using the appropriate style. ▶ Record search results accurately. ▶ Distinguish between different systems available for managing references, e.g. social bookmarking tools, card index, diary, Refworks. ▶ Demonstrate the ability to write online for different audiences, e.g. blog entry for private use, for reading by other students, for reading by tutor, or for reading by anyone in the world. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Demonstrate accurate and appropriate referencing of the thoughts and ideas of others. ▶ Distinguish between different tools and techniques for managing and exporting references; select and use as appropriate for a specific task. ▶ Engage in appropriate and effective communication online, in a variety of contexts (study, informal, transactional etc.) and using a variety of tools (e.g. research networks, social bookmarking, blogging). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Apply a suitable method for managing a large volume of information. ▶ Produce a synthesis of information from a range of diverse materials on a complex subject. ▶ Produce a comprehensive literature review in a specific subject. ▶ Articulate the ethical and legal requirements surrounding the use and re-use of information and identify sources of relevant advice. ▶ Construct a major bibliography using bibliographic management tools, referencing a large range of materials. ▶ Distinguish between platforms for publishing digital content, recognising the difference between formal publication and information exchange.

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	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Masters
Collaborate and share digital content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Successfully follow instructions for sharing digital content with multiple recipients using the main OU VLE tools. ▶ Contribute to an online dialogue with other students as part of a teacher-led task. ▶ Distinguish between the different roles and contributions that may be required to produce a piece of work collaboratively online. ▶ Demonstrate the ability to access an external social media site with subject-related content, and contribute or download digital content. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Demonstrate the ability to create and publish content in multimedia formats to communicate subject-related opinions and ideas in OU VLE environments. ▶ Successfully negotiate roles and carry out own role within a task as part of a teacher- or student-led online activity. ▶ Successfully engage in the collaborative production of digital content related to study activity. ▶ Reflect on a collaborative process and its effect on all members of the group, including oneself, e.g. show awareness of online group dynamic. ▶ Contribute digital content acquired through engagement in external subject-related and social media environments to an OU collective space. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Produce a shared digital asset or output in collaboration with others as part of an assessed activity. ▶ Contribute a re-purposed, shared or collaboratively produced artefact for the benefit of a wider online audience. ▶ Contribute benefits from personal engagement with external social and subject-related networks to the work of a study group. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Demonstrate leadership in an online professional community, e.g. take the initiative in proposing appropriate media and working methods, facilitate the group working through agreed processes, evaluate group outputs. ▶ Give evidence of engagement in online communities and professional (subject) groups using multiple technologies and demonstrate successful management of group interactions.