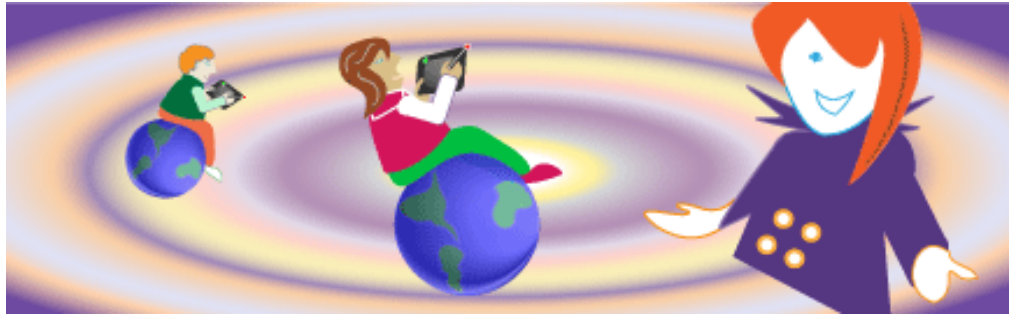


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eLearning Papers



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Editorial: Digital Literacy - the evolution of the 21st century Literacies

In the beginning of the 21st century, we are experiencing an interesting evolution of the demand for learning both by individuals, societies and education authorities. Evidently, the acrimonious relation between the education provision and the social mandates of growth (performance) and social inclusion is becoming extremely complex. Economic globalization and the emergence of what has been identified as the Knowledge Society go, hand-in-hand, with a gradually changing set of key competences. They have been feeding in the dialogue about academic and policy implementation of what some thinkers and stakeholders already have named as the Literacies of the 21st century.

It seems that we are facing a demanding exercise of re-defining the Literacies in a lifelong learning perspective. This challenge goes from their starting definition (see the three Rs: Reading, Writing and Arithmetics), that corresponded to the Industrial Society's massively comprehensive education model, to what today and for the coming years seems to prevail as the widely accepted necessary set (and level) of Competencies in the worlds of the individuals' "life" (personal and cultural development, citizenship, etc.) and "work" (specific knowledge and skills). This has to be a set of Competencies, which, in its turn, correspond to the societal and conceptual structures of the emerging Knowledge Society. These Competencies - or the new Literacies -, which to a certain extent are related to the technical coding of the 21st century, are still being conceived as the pillars of Knowledge building and Skills development, not to mention their impact on the structuring of the School Education system (K-12) paradigm.

There is already considerable academic work to define and, more important, to effectively embed the above mentioned Competencies into the school education system. Recently a group of EU national experts have also reached a consensus on a rather arbitrary but probably functioning set of Key Competencies, in which the Digital Literacy is included, one among eight others. Yet, presenting a strong "horizontal" character compared to the other seven, possibly with the exception of the Learning-to-learn Competency!

Whether or not we deal with a paradigm shift, we certainly need to face the increasing Policy inter-dependence between Education and Social Inclusion. In other words, the new Equity Challenge implies that we have to re-engineer our learning systems, from the delivery of massive education to the engagement of people in massive knowledge experiences, by upgrading their Learning-to-learn Competence, whereby Digital Literacy takes a pivotal meaning.

The papers hosted in this issue are addressing some aspects of the challenge and the evolutions related with. They help to form a better understanding of the problem. Enjoy their reading!



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“ If we wish to empower seniors digitally we should focus on their goals for digital usage, the areas in which digital activity is socially meaningful and contribute directly to the development of meaning and identity. ”

Keywords

digital literacy; inclusion; learning; senior citizens, identity, third age, generation gap

Full text

<http://www.elearningeuropa.info/files/media/media18500.pdf>

Digital Literacy for the Third Age: Sustaining Identity in an Uncertain World

The world in which we live - the world of late modernity - is characterised by a deep uncertainty; uncertainty not only about the foundations of social structure, but also about individual identity. Digital technology offers powerful tools for learning, for self-expression, and for the building, maintenance and sharing of identity. But for citizens of the third age, these aspects of the modern world pose a threat to their identity. Being able to use the technology appropriately in real situations is therefore important to any citizen.

Technology has not changed the notion of what learning is, but it has opened up more avenues in thinking how it can be done. If we wish to empower seniors digitally we should focus on their goals for digital usage, the areas in which digital activity is socially meaningful and contribute directly to the development of meaning and identity.

This paper presents a three-level model of digital literacy, understanding that by being aware of the challenges older citizens are facing in modern society we can consider more clearly the role which digital literacy, and its relation to learning, may play in addressing their predicament. Because of the particular uncertainties of the role of our seniors in society, digital literacy can be of great value as a means of social involvement and assertion. Gaining a literacy of the digital, senior citizens can retain a hold on the shape of their lives in an era of increasing uncertainty. In a society where inter-generational uncertainty is probably greater than it has ever been, it can also offer the possibility of a bridge of understanding across generations.



Montse Guitert



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“ UOC’s proposal of digital literacy for the acquisition of ICT competences in the academic and professional scope is based on a compulsory subject of each degree. ”

Keywords

Digital Literacy, ICT competences, Higher Education, EHEA, online environment, UOC

Full text

<http://www.elearningeuropa.info/files/media/media18503.pdf>

A digital literacy proposal in online Higher Education: the UOC scenario

Universities have a key role in providing students with strategies and competences to allow them to be part of the current information society and hence to be able to develop a productive career. The Open University of Catalonia (UOC) is a fully online university created in 1995 to provide distance-learning university-level education. ICTs were integrated to UOC’s educational activity since its first steps as a compulsory subject common to all degrees, aimed to help students to cope with a virtual environment and to familiarize them with the university’s specific online tools. This subject has been evolving along these last 11 years of existence in line with new technologies and also according to the necessities of students. Nowadays it is a subject that works the basic competences in ICTs and is inspired by the declaration of Bologna.

In a scenario in which the university is making strategic decisions about the implementation of the new degrees within the framework of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), this competence is defined at the UOC as follows: “The use and application of ICTs in the academic and professional environment”. UOC’s proposal of digital literacy for the acquisition of ICT competences in the academic and professional scope is based on a compulsory subject of each degree. This 6-credit ECTS subject is mandatory during the first semester within the cross-sectional basic credits and is based on the rational and critical use of ICTs, some knowledge of digital technology, the procedures of the virtual project and on new forms of constructing and representing knowledge for the new social Internet (blogs, wikis, social markers etc.) and for multiple alphabetizations.

On the basis of UOC’s experience we are in a position to single out the key transferable elements for designing a proposal for achieving digital literacy in any educational context: the definition of the ICT competence, the gradual acquisition of ICT skills through creating a project-based work, team work to using and applying new tools and the role of consultants.



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“ The new digital broadcasting platforms will contribute to media diversity in many countries' future and will increase the possibility of learning activities and governmental and cultural services for citizens. ”

Keywords

t-learning, interactivity, inclusion, digital decoder, media, dvb-t, dvt, dt, sbtvd, digital terrestrial television, broadcasting platforms

Full text

<http://www.elearningeuropa.info/files/media/media18506.pdf>

T-learning for social inclusion

This paper focuses on research themes related to t-learning applications. It particularly deals with digital divide and social inclusion issues and the most relevant features of t-learning. It reports also the main evidences arising from the Beacon project, funded on the last call of the 6th framework program. BEACON (Brazilian European Consortium for DTT Services) is a three years innovative research project on Digital Terrestrial Television with three core objectives:

- the development of interoperability between the European (DVB) and the Brazilian (SBTVD) Digital Terrestrial Television standards;
- the study of a methodology for distance learning through digital television;
- the delivery of t-learning services related to social inclusion in Sao Paulo, Brasil.

The term t-learning can be related to the fruition of interactive training materials, contents and services using a digital decoder. The t-learning usability features and their ability to spread on a larger scale than eLearning open up new scenarios for teaching addressed to a broader number of potential users, in terms of both formal and non formal training. The real development of the t-learning system and its applications is based on the integration of the opportunities and functionalities of both Digital Terrestrial Television and eLearning, especially in terms of increasing interactivity, bringing up opportunities for more engaged learning and virtual communities.

The development of new value added services based on the Digital Video Broadcasting Terrestrial (DVB-T) technology will make it possible to address a large amount of end users. The main goal is to offer learning services to users that can't afford - for economic or cultural causes - an internet connection and a PC, but are TV owners, and to let them acquire knowledge in many sectors, favouring the improvement of their working competitiveness. The new digital broadcasting platforms will contribute to media diversity in many countries' future and will increase the possibility of learning activities and governmental and cultural services for citizens.



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“ The learning to learn
competence makes people
aware of how and why they
acquire, process and
memorise different types of
knowledge. ”

Keywords

Digital literacy, Learning
Design, Networked learning,
Social Networking, Learning-
to-learn, PKM, personal
knowledge management

Full text

[http://www.elearningeuropa.info/
files/media/media18509.pdf](http://www.elearningeuropa.info/files/media/media18509.pdf)

Designing e-tivities to increase learning-to-learn abilities

In this paper we present a detailed set of e-tivities framed in a learning design context. The e-tivities use Internet tools for teaching Personal Knowledge Management skills (PKM) to adult learners. PKM practices and the related required skills are strictly related to learning-to-learn competencies, which have been identified as key to grow an adequate attitude to lifelong learning. Internet technologies, on the other hand, are seen as having an undisclosed potential to let people more easily and effectively jump into the “lifelong learning-to-learn” experience. The learning to learn competence makes people aware of how and why they acquire, process and memorise different types of knowledge.

The results here introduced are rooted in the development of a theory related to Personal Knowledge Management skills presented in previous works, in which such competences are divided into two main groups: Basic and Higher Order PKM skills.

The e-tivities introduced in this paper can provide an initial reference framework, both for the definition of the learning objects (through the specification of the Basic and Higher Order Personal Knowledge Management Skills) as well as for the macro design of the Skills Development Modules in which the PKM skills should be taught.



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“ Digital literacy does not only mean that the people possess the technical infrastructure, it also means that they are able to maximise the possibilities these new technologies offer to them. ”

Keywords

Accessibility, Digital Literacy, Competence, Skills, Inclusion, Spread, management, dissemination

Full text

<http://www.elearningeuropa.info/files/media/media18513.pdf>

How to strengthen digital literacy? Practical example of a European initiative “SPread”

Digital Literacy has become one of the main competences in the 21st century. Without being able to use digital media effectively and responsibly the chances on the global market are very low. Nowadays more than 250 million Europeans are regular visitors to the Internet. Yet despite this encouraging figure, large sections of the population continue to be barred from the multiple new opportunities, such as Web 2.0 or mobile learning. But even those who are using the new digital media regularly are not imperatively digital literate. Digital literacy does not only mean that the people possess the technical infrastructure, it also means that they are able to maximise the possibilities these new technologies offer to them. What does this mean exactly? And why is digital literacy of such importance? In the following article we will give answers on these questions.

After presenting the different theoretical point of views on digital literacy we will present one best practice example: the European project SPread. By developing a toolkit on the management of digital literacy projects SPread aims at disseminating digital literacy all over Europe and to raise awareness on this important topic. The SPread toolkit gives useful hints regarding the development, coordination and financing of large scaled digital literacy projects. So far we have received very positive response to the toolkit from all over Europe.