

Digital Information Fluency: It's Not Your Mother's Information Literacy

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Abstract

As part of its 2009 WASC accreditation reaffirmation process, UC San Diego chose the theme of Information Literacy (IL) for its Educational Effectiveness review. This was a welcome choice for UCSD librarians because there is no campus-wide IL program. The accreditation IL advisory group, made up of a cross-section of faculty, student affairs managers, IT professionals, writing program instructors, lecturers, librarians (including me), and a former college dean, decided to propose far-reaching and thoughtful changes at UCSD. They came up with a framework of Digital Information Fluency (DIF) that goes beyond the ACRL Information Literacy guidelines, thus “polishing our present to transform our future.”

How we Defined Digital Information Fluency (DIF)

Digital Information Fluency is a system of three interrelated competencies. Taken in the aggregate, the three competencies constitute an unfolding intellectual and academic progression that occurs as a result of a student's full educational experience as an undergraduate at UC San Diego, i.e., throughout a student's undergraduate curriculum, and culminates in their graduating with recognizable Digital Information Fluency skills.

Foundational Competency

- Basic knowledge of computing and the lifecycle of digital information
- Skills involved with the identification, navigation, evaluation and communication of digital information
- Facility to participate in and contribute to digital communities.

Learning Goals

1. Student has a basic knowledge of computing that includes understanding the structural features of information systems and the lifecycle of digital information.
2. Student is able to select appropriate discovery tools to meet information needs, can identify appropriate Internet resources to use, can formulate search queries to effectively extract results, and can critically evaluate the credibility and significance of Internet sources.
3. Student understands the principles of copyright and his/her rights as a creator of information, follows those principles by using accepted practices of attribution of sources, and knows the conditions for and consequences of infringement.
4. Student has a basic understanding of digital content production principles and techniques.

5. Student has an awareness of social norms and sufficient technical skills to successfully and ethically communicate and collaborate in a virtual environment.

Conceptual Competency

- Understanding of the history, development and general structural features of digital technologies and digital information
- Understanding of methods and techniques that can be used to represent information
- Ability to comprehend the rhetorical strategies used in text-based and multimedia arguments.

Learning Goals

1. Student understands the societal dimensions (e.g. historical, political, cultural, and economic) of digital technologies and digital information.
2. Student understands the general methods and techniques for presenting information and understands that digital representations of information have limitations.
3. Student can compare and distinguish between the structure and impact of the rhetorical strategies commonly used in formal written arguments and those used in multimedia arguments.

Expressive Competency

- Ability to use digital information and artifacts in the creation and communication of meaningful arguments in the digital environment

Learning Goals

1. Student can apply the fundamental design principles that inform the creation and efficacy of digital media artifacts.
2. Student is able to create and identify patterns and interpretations of digital information and data to validate their own analysis.
3. Student is able to create and produce digital media artifacts to support different rhetorical strategies.
4. Student is able to make effective visual/auditory multimedia arguments.

See the complete WASC Accreditation Report of the Senate-Administration Advisory Group on Information Literacy: <http://academicaffairs.ucsd.edu/ug-ed/resources/reports/AGIL>