

Study **SMART**

BUILD THE SKILLS FOR YOUR SUCCESS



DIGITAL LITERACY

PDF resources included in this booklet

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DIGITAL LITERACY

How can you use technology for academic and future career success?

Digital Literacy

Whether you're a digital native or not, you live, learn, and work in a digital society. Communication and access to information is increasingly through digital technologies like internet platforms, social media, and mobile devices. Find out what digital literacy is and how to develop your skills in practical, professional, and communicative elements of digital literacy.

Digital literacy is really important now, while you're a university student. It'll also be really important in the future when you enter the professional world. In your workplace you'll be required to interact with people in digital environments, use information in appropriate ways, and create new ideas and products collaboratively. Above all, you'll need to maintain your digital identity and wellbeing as the digital landscape continues to change at a fast pace.

STUDY SMART WEBSITE

Find this section on the Study Smart website here:

http://westernsydney.edu.au/studysmart/home/digital_literacy



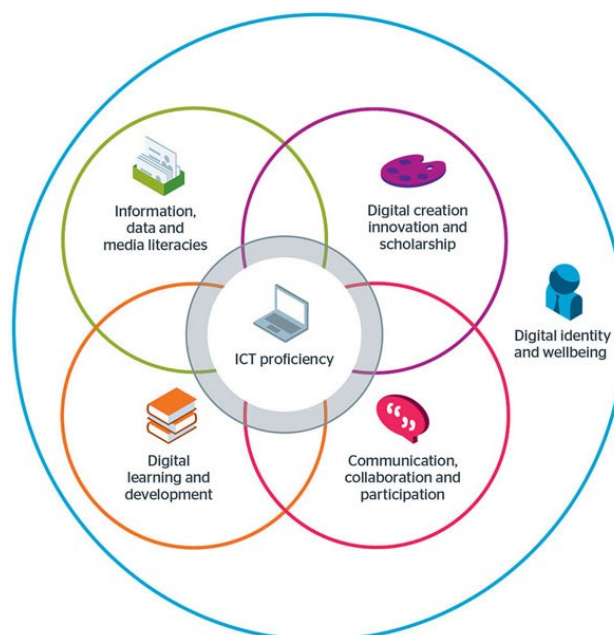
What is Digital Literacy?

Digital literacy means having the skills you need to live, learn, and work in a society where communication and access to information is increasingly through digital technologies like internet platforms, social media, and mobile devices. Developing your **critical thinking skills** is essential when you're confronted with so much information in different formats – searching, sifting, evaluating, applying and producing information all require you to think critically.

Communication is also a key aspect of digital literacy. When communicating in virtual environments, the ability to clearly express your ideas, ask relevant questions, maintain respect, and build trust is just as important as when communicating in person.

You'll also need **practical skills** in using technology to access, manage, manipulate and create information in an ethical and sustainable way. It's a continual learning process because there are always new apps and updates to contend with, but your future self will thank you if you keep your digital life in order!

Here you can learn more about the six elements of digital capability as modelled by **Jisc**. The Jisc model below illustrates the idea that proficiency in ICT (Information and Communication Technology) is a core element, whilst other skills overlap and build on this capability, and overarching it all is our digital identity and wellbeing.





Technology Skills for Study and Work

Information and communication technology (ICT) refers to technologies like computers, mobile phones, and tablet devices, as well as the many software programs that these machines can run, which allow us to access information and communicate with each other.

Whether you are required to attend campus or not, it's likely that you will spend a significant portion of time studying online. You'll need to know how to access learning materials, how to communicate effectively with other students and staff using email and discussion boards, and which software to use for producing your assignments.

Check out these ICT essentials for Western Sydney students:

- **vUWS** (pronounced 'views') is the University's e-Learning system
- Your **Student email** is the official communication channel between you and the University
- **Zoom** is available for videoconferencing
- **Western Wi-Fi** is the University's on campus wireless network
- **Computer lab locations and facilities** on each campus
- **IT Service Desk** includes phone, email, and chat support

You might also decide to learn some basic coding or discover some of the free software tools for presenting and managing content on the web.

- Presentation apps (**MS Powerpoint Online, Prezi, Projeqt, eMaze, Slides**)
- **Microsoft Office Tutorials**
- University staff and students have free access to the **LinkedInLearning** online training library covering software titles, scripting languages, design and web development platforms. You need to **activate your account with your Western Student email address and password**
- Once you've activated your account (as above), try the LinkedIn Learning topic: **Skills and tools for student success**

Because software and hardware are always changing, you'll need to consider how the documents and projects you create whilst at uni will remain accessible in future. Try saving electronic documents in **open file formats** wherever possible, back up your files regularly, and have a **file naming system** so you know what's what!

- The **Personal Digital Archive Toolkit** provides steps to preserve your digital photographs, emails, recordings, and documents.



Digital Participation

This aspect of digital literacy is about respectful, positive, and effective participation in digital networks. As a student at Western you'll join your learning community in online spaces such as [vUWS](#) and [WesternLife](#), and you may also have opportunities for communication and collaboration via social networking platforms like [Discord](#).

Communication

How you present yourself online is your personal brand, and just like a marketing brand it needs to be managed to ensure the right messages are put out to the world. This doesn't mean you need to tell lies or omit information - in fact, just the opposite! Presenting yourself in an authentic, courteous way and demonstrating respect for the feelings and opinions presented by others is a great way to approach online communication and collaboration.

- [Social Media: Guidelines for Students](#) (Western Sydney University)
- [Online Netiquette](#) (video, 3:30, Western Sydney University)

Collaboration

You can harness technology for collaboration as well as communication. Web-based applications like [Google Docs](#) allow real-time editing by all group members, removing the need to endlessly email different versions to each other.

Other popular web-based technologies for communication and collaboration are [blogs and wikis](#). It's possible some of your assignments may involve use of these tools, either within [vUWS](#) or using external sites. One famous wiki is [Wikipedia](#) but there are many others, usually based around particular topics, which can be a useful source of information and links to material.

Please note, though, that wikis and blogs are not considered to be scholarly sources. Depending on the context of your assignment, they will not usually be suitable sources for you to cite in your reference list.

Participation

Your participation in the digital world is ideally a two-way interaction. To be fully digitally literate, you will not only be a capable, confident consumer of information and technology, but you will also become an active participant as a producer of content.

Understanding the technical, legal, social, and ethical aspects of digital content creation will ensure you can contribute in a positive way to our networked society.

Digital inclusion refers to the idea that people of all backgrounds and abilities deserve equal access to technology and its benefits. As a creator of content, it's worth considering your material's **accessibility** and providing alternative access methods wherever possible.

- Visit **Centre for Inclusive Design** for more about digital inclusion and web accessibility.



Digital Learning

This aspect of digital literacy is connected with your effective use of technology for formal and informal lifelong learning.

Online Learning

In order to really make the most of the online learning experience, you will need to understand your own preferred learning style. The way you like to learn encompasses things like:

- how you prefer to have information presented
(do you like to read and absorb first, do an activity, or just jump into a discussion?)
- the technique you use to understand and remember information
(do you make mind maps, or highlight and make notes for yourself?)
- the way in which you interact with other learners
(are you happy to share ideas with others before you fully understand the topic, or do you feel you have to have mastered something before you make a comment?)

Online Reading

A common feature of online study is that your textbook or reading material is presented in ebook format. You can also check the [Library ebooks guide](#) for access to a range of ebook platforms.

Most people find it a very different experience when reading on screen, compared to reading a printed text. It might take practice and persistence to find what works for you. The [Reading on Screen website](#) offers some great advice on how to make reading on screen easier, including a handy [Quick Guide](#).

E-Portfolios

One digital tool which encourages learning through self-reflection is an [e-portfolio](#). You may be required to start one for your course, or you might like to produce one anyway - perhaps to record your personal learning journey or to capture achievements that potential employers will be interested in.

Lifelong Learning

Lifelong learning is about learning as a continual process. Along the journey, lifelong learners discover new interests, build their knowledge, and strive to approach new tasks with an active, enquiring mind.

There are many free courses online, which you can access to supplement your formal learning. Check

out providers such as [Coursera](#), [edX](#), [FutureLearn](#), and make use of the University's free access to LinkedIn Learning ([register with your Western account](#)).

The University of Edinburgh's [23 Things for Digital Knowledge](#) is a self-directed course which aims to expose you to a range of digital tools for your personal and professional development as a researcher, academic, student, or professional.

Personal Learning Networks

The amazing connectivity of the World Wide Web provides an opportunity for you to build a personal learning network. In other words, tapping into the information and ideas that people with similar interests share through social networking platforms is an effective way to increase your understanding and find some really current research material too. You can use these platforms to (politely) ask questions, find new research, or share material that you have found useful (always include where you found it).

It's wise to pay attention to [account security](#) and [privacy settings](#) on all social networking sites, and please, don't post when you are upset or under the influence because this may impact your [perceived employability](#).

The Value of Feedback

As a digital learner, you may receive feedback from tutors in a variety of formats. To maximise the value of feedback, ensure you reflect and act on it.

See the Study Smart resources:

- [Track, progress, success](#)
- [Feedback hide and seek](#)



Digital YOU: Identity and Wellbeing

Actively managing your digital identity and reputation, and caring for your digital wellbeing, is a crucial and encompassing element for you to fulfil your potential in today's digital society.

Your Digital Footprint

You may have heard of the idea of a **digital footprint**. This refers to the traces of your personal and professional information that are left in online networks - both intentionally and unintentionally. Posting material online effectively means you are letting go of control over it, so you want to be sure it will not damage your reputation or credibility. Unfortunately, there are people who enjoy bullying others in digital spaces, or who will take advantage of you if given the opportunity. Report cyberbullying immediately, whether you are the victim or a bystander.

Cyberbullying fact sheet (Australian Human Rights Commission)

This series of **tutorials by the Internet Society** provides more information about minimising your digital footprint.

Digital Security

In order to protect your wellbeing, it's also important to protect your privacy. This is not only about what you choose to share, but also relates to the information that is collected about you in relation to your online interactions, whether these are financial, social, professional, medical or legal.

Student guide to cyber security (Western Sydney University, PDF)

Scamwatch (Australian Competition and Consumer Commission)

Finding a Balance

Maintaining a balance between real world and digital interactions is also crucial for mental and physical wellbeing. Keep it real, and unplug every so often!

This article on the ABC Health & Wellbeing website highlights the importance of controlling the amount of time you spend checking your phone: **How to do a digital detox**.

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