



Government of **Western Australia**
School Curriculum and Standards Authority



General Capabilities

Digital literacy



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Acknowledgement of Country

Kaya.

The School Curriculum and Standards Authority (the Authority) acknowledges that our offices are on Whadjuk Noongar boodjar and that we deliver our services on the country of many traditional custodians and language groups throughout Western Australia. The Authority acknowledges the traditional custodians throughout Western Australia and their continuing connection to land, waters and community.

We offer our respect to Elders past and present.

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Digital literacy



What is Digital literacy?

Digital literacy encompasses the knowledge and skills students need to create, manage, communicate and investigate data, information and ideas, and solve problems in a digital environment. It assists students to work collaboratively at school and in their lives beyond school.

Digital literacy involves students critically identifying and appropriately selecting and using digital devices or systems and learning to make the most of the technologies available to them. Students adapt to new ways of doing things as technologies evolve, and protect the safety of themselves and others in digital environments.



Image adapted from: Kreinick, 2018

How can you use the Digital literacy learning continuum?

Digital Technologies explicitly supports the development of digital literacy across the curriculum. In the Digital Technologies curriculum, students' abilities to plan and develop software solutions and understand how digital systems interrelate and how data is represented in various ways are emphasised. Digital literacy focuses on the end user creating digital solutions with software for an intended purpose or to share with a selected audience. Aspects of data acquisition, interpretation, privacy and security are embedded within both the Digital Technologies curriculum and the Digital literacy general capability.

Digital literacy is context-dependent and involves students developing the knowledge and skills needed to learn effectively in the digital world. Development of digital literacy allows students to operate and manage digital systems and practise digital safety and wellbeing while investigating, creating and communicating.

As students develop digital literacy skills, they build their understanding of how to utilise digital tools when designing digital solutions. While some elements of digital literacy are addressed in the Digital Technologies curriculum, concepts and skills are consolidated and extended across all learning areas.

The Digital literacy sub-elements are embedded in some of the examples and selected content descriptions in the Digital Technologies curriculum and may be taught through the content and learning programs across the other learning areas.

Students adapt to new ways of doing things as technologies evolve, and protect the safety of themselves and others in digital environments.

Structure

The Digital literacy learning continuum is organised into four elements, as shown in Figure 1:

- Practising digital safety and wellbeing
- Investigating
- Creating and exchanging
- Managing and operating.



Figure 1:
Digital literacy elements

Practising digital safety and wellbeing

This element is organised into three sub-elements:

- **Manage online safety** – students develop the appropriate technical, social, cognitive, communicative and decision-making skills to address online risks. They recognise the content risks that they face online, such as hurtful user-generated content, and the strategies involved in dealing with them.
- **Manage digital privacy and identity** – students recognise the importance of controlling and shaping their own digital identity. They create and curate their online identities to positively tell their stories, while recognising how personal use of digital media may have implications for their digital footprint.
- **Manage digital wellbeing** – students consider the nature and impact of digital tool use. They develop understanding that behaviours such as excessive screen time, digital workload, distraction and multitasking can have an impact on their health, productivity, wellbeing and lifestyle. They understand the benefits and risks of digital participation in relation to health and wellbeing outcomes.

Investigating

This element is organised into three sub-elements:

- **Locate information** – students curate information from digital resources. They effectively use research strategies to locate information and other resources. Students articulate their information and content needs and effectively navigate information and content they encounter.
- **Acquire and collate data** – students understand how data can be generated and how to process data based on statistical understanding. They create or use algorithms to recognise significant patterns and improve decision-making processes. They explore relevant datasets and read, manage and process data from a variety of sources.
- **Interpret data** – students create and build knowledge by analysing data and communicating its meaning to others, using various data visualisation tools. They present patterns, trends and analytical insights from data to facilitate problem-solving and decision-making.

Creating and exchanging

This element is organised into three sub-elements:

- **Plan** – students use digital tools to plan and manage a process that considers design constraints and risks.
- **Create, communicate and collaborate** – students execute plans for the design of digital content and to develop, test and refine models to create original products. Students recognise different types of peer-to-peer communication and collaboration strategies, tools and formats, and decide which methods are most effective for individual or collaborative goals.
- **Respect intellectual property** – students understand the ethical and legal responsibilities around ownership and remixing of digital content; for example, plagiarism, copyright, fair dealing and licensing. They demonstrate responsibility and respect for others by protecting their own digital creations and crediting others' content when appropriate.

Managing and operating

This element is organised into three sub-elements:

- **Manage content** – students interact with information and data, save content using appropriate and logical conventions, and retrieve content from personal, networked and cloud spaces.
- **Protect content** – students identify potential threats and implement relevant cybersecurity practices, such as using secure passwords. They use technology without compromising their data and devices.
- **Select and operate tools** – students apply technical knowledge and skills to select, use and troubleshoot appropriate digital tools. They develop an understanding of hardware and software components, and the operations of appropriate digital systems, including their functions, processes and procedures.

The Digital literacy learning continuum is set out in Tables 1–4.



Image adapted from: Caiaimage/Sam Edwards, n.d.

Policies

Teachers are reminded to refer to their school system/sector's policies and procedures as well as any school-based procedures regarding digital learning and the use of digital learning devices, particularly in relation to:

- cybersecurity
- use of mobile devices
- privacy considerations
- use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools.

learning continuum

Table 1

Practising digital safety and wellbeing			
Student levels	Sub-elements		
	Manage online safety	Manage digital privacy and identity	Manage digital wellbeing
L1	Use online tools that are safe or only used under direct supervision, seeking help from trusted adults when feeling unsafe	Recognise their personal data and that data (including text, images, and video) can be seen by others when shared online	Follow adult directions for the use of digital tools at school and home
L2	Use online tools that are age-appropriate or only used under supervision, seeking help from trusted adults when feeling unsafe	Recognise that online tools (websites and apps) store their personal data, which may give an impression of them	Follow agreed rules for the healthy use of digital tools and apply them at school and home
L3	Report negative or harmful online behaviour by seeking help from trusted adults	Identify their digital footprint (personal data stored by online tools) Recognise that their digital identity represents them online and can give a negative impression Give and seek consent before sharing online with peers and trusted adults	Follow an agreed code of conduct for the healthy use of digital tools
L4	Report negative or harmful online behaviour to trusted adults, and know how to report it using online tools Recognise when to step away from negative online social interactions	Recognise the permanence of their digital footprint and digital identity and the associated risks, including to their reputation Give and seek consent before sharing online in trusted groups	Follow an agreed code of conduct for the healthy and productive use of digital tools, considering the impact of tool use on wellbeing
L5	Identify online abuse and bullying and report them to trusted adults and to appropriate authorities, and using online tools Stop engaging in negative online social interactions	Recognise that their digital footprint is valuable, used by online tools for targeting, and that data shared online is no longer under their control Consider who they trust with their data, review privacy policies before giving consent and seek consent before sharing online	Develop routines to support their balanced and constructive use of digital tools Identify indicators of unhealthy usage
L6	Engage in safe, legal and ethical online behaviour and defuse negative online social interactions Recognise the benefits and risks of anonymity online	Recognise that their actions contribute to their passive digital footprint Manage their digital identity by controlling privacy, connections and group settings, and curating posts Consent selectively to data collection after assessing the benefits and risks of an online tool's privacy policy	Self-regulate the use of digital tools to purposefully enhance their wellbeing Identify how tools are designed to capture their attention

Table 2

Investigating			
Sub-elements			
Student levels	Locate information	Acquire and collate data	Interpret data
L1	Use simple digital tools to explore sorting data and information provided as part of learning experiences		
L2	Locate information through search engines and in documents by applying search terms, and select relevant information	Collect data by counting, measuring and observing with familiar digital tools	Classify and group data using familiar digital tools to answer simple questions
L3	Locate information through search engines and in documents by applying specific search terms, and select and retrieve relevant information from multiple sources	Collect and access data using a range of digital tools and methods in response to a defined question	Organise, summarise and visualise data using a range of digital tools to identify patterns and answer questions
L4	Locate information through search engines and in documents by applying specific search terms based on set criteria, and select and retrieve relevant information from multiple sources	Collect and access data using a range of digital tools and methods in response to a defined question or problem	Analyse and visualise data using a range of digital tools to identify patterns and make predictions
L5	Locate, select and retrieve relevant information from multiple sources, exploring advanced search functions and targeted criteria	Collect and access data from a range of sources using specialised digital tools in response to problems, and evaluate it for relevance	Analyse and visualise data by selecting and using a range of digital tools to infer relationships and make predictions
L6	Locate relevant information across multiple sources by applying advanced search functions and using purposefully selected and contextually specific terms and criteria	Collect and evaluate quantitative and qualitative data using specialised digital tools and processes in the context of identified problems	Analyse and visualise multidimensional data by selecting and using a range of interactive tools to draw conclusions and make predictions

Table 3

Creating and exchanging			
Sub-elements			
Student levels	Plan	Create, communicate and collaborate	Respect intellectual property
L1		Use simple digital tools to create content	Identify who owns class data
L2	Use simple digital tools to contribute to a basic plan to complete a task	Experiment with the features of familiar digital tools to create content	Recognise ownership of products that others produce or that are produced collaboratively
L3	Use familiar digital tools to develop and follow a basic plan to complete a task	Use the core features of a range of digital tools to create content and communicate and collaborate with peers and trusted adults	Respect products created by someone else by acknowledging when they use them and use strategies such as indicating the source
L4	Select and use digital tools to develop and follow a plan to complete individual tasks and group projects	Select and control a variety of features in appropriate digital tools to create content and communicate and collaborate with trusted groups	Respect intellectual property by identifying the legal obligations regarding the ownership and appropriate use of products, exploring copyright protocols and applying some referencing conventions
L5	Use simple planning tools to develop and follow a plan to complete individual and collaborative projects	Select and control advanced features of appropriate digital tools to independently create content and effectively communicate and collaborate with wider groups	Respect intellectual property by applying practices that comply with ethical and legal obligations, referencing conventions and copyright protocols
L6	Use project management tools to develop and track a plan to complete individual and collaborative projects	Select and control the features of digital tools to purposefully create content and effectively communicate and collaborate, inclusive of diverse groups	Respect intellectual property by identifying and applying practices that meet legal and ethical obligations, referencing conventions, and copyright and trademark protocols

Table 4

Managing and operating			
Sub-elements			
Student levels	Manage content	Protect content	Select and operate tools
L1	Save and retrieve content in an app		Use simple digital tools to explore tasks and consolidate learning Seek help when encountering a problem
L2	Save and retrieve content with an agreed name	Save and access content in their individual school account	Use familiar digital tools to complete tasks and consolidate learning Attempt to solve a problem before seeking help
L3	Save and retrieve content in agreed locations with an appropriate name	Save and access content in shared folders using their individual school account	Select and use a range of digital tools to complete tasks Attempt to solve a problem individually and with peers before seeking help
L4	Store content using appropriate names and folders for ease of retrieval	Protect content when sharing with peers and trusted adults by setting appropriate access controls	Select and use the core features of digital tools to efficiently complete tasks Troubleshoot basic problems and identify repetitive tasks to automate
L5	Store and back up content online for access and editing from multiple devices	Protect content when sharing by selecting appropriate access controls for individuals and shared links for wider groups	Select and use the advanced or unfamiliar features of digital tools to efficiently complete tasks Troubleshoot common problems and automate repetitive tasks
L6	Store content systematically online for access and editing (with version history) from multiple devices and ensure data is reliably backed up	Protect content when sharing by purposefully selecting appropriate access controls for individuals and groups	Confidently select and operate advanced and emerging digital tools Troubleshoot common problems systematically and seek to improve efficiency by developing new skills

Glossary

A

access controls

Security techniques that allow an owner of content to control or regulate who can view or use it. Access controls are a means of determining who is authorised to and able to access content.

access data

To obtain data from existing sources, such as shared folders and public databases.

advanced search functions

Words and prefixes used in a search engine that narrow the focus of a web search, for example Boolean search operators or required terms, to return targeted results.

automate

To use software features, rather than repetitive manual instructions, to achieve a result; for example, using a formula in a spreadsheet to repeatedly calculate values.

B

back up (online)

To copy and store data remotely over the internet. Backing up online (or in the cloud) also makes it easier to access files from different digital tools.

C

consent

Informed and freely given agreement to engage in an activity, or permission for a specific thing to happen. This could include agreement on what personal data can be shared online.

content

Output created using digital tools; for example, a greeting card, a timeline, an essay, digital art, a chart, an animation, a 3D model, a presentation, an interactive visualisation or a podcast.

criteria (search terms)

Measures or standards used as a basis for selecting relevant information; for example, only using information that is free to use or share, or restricting searches to images only.

curating posts

Selecting and organising posts created by others and sharing them with your own audience, often through social media, blogs and newsletters.

D

data

A general term for a set of observations or measurements collected during an investigation. Primary data is collected by the user; secondary data is collected by others.

digital footprint

The total set of traceable data left behind by a person using digital tools. A person's digital footprint includes active data, such as emails, and passive data, such as browser history.

digital identity

How an individual is represented or perceived online, often via comments or social media posts. A person's digital identity can be based on their activities, connections or tags.

digital tools

Digital hardware, software, platforms and resources used to develop and communicate learning, ideas and information; for example, software and hardware used to compose and record music.

E**emerging digital tools**

Hardware, software, platforms and digital resources whose development and applications are not yet realised or widespread; for example, robotics, artificial intelligence and augmented reality.

H**healthy and productive use**

The application of habits or rules when using digital tools with the intention of maintaining and promoting digital wellbeing, as well as in other purposeful endeavours such as achieving positive results in learning.

I**interactive tools**

Software that enables the actions or input of a user to change the behaviour, view or results. Interactive tools, such as spreadsheets, help users to draw conclusions and make predictions.

M**multidimensional data**

Data that has many dimensions and values. The data is structured in many rows and columns and can be modelled and viewed in multiple dimensions, facilitating interpretation.

O**online behaviour**

Actions taken when interacting with others in an online environment. Online behaviour should be respectful, inclusive, positive and proactive in order to minimise risks and harmful treatment.

online safety

The practice of individuals protecting themselves and others from online harm and risks that might jeopardise their personal information, lead to unsafe communications or affect their mental health and wellbeing.

online social interactions

Exchanges between individuals when using online tools, which are typically informal; for example, interactions relating to playing games or sharing experiences within a sporting group.

online tools

Digital hardware, software, platforms and resources that are connected to the internet and help users perform tasks; for example, websites for online shopping and fitness apps.

P**personal data**

Data and information that can readily identify an individual; for example, a person's name, signature, home address, email address, photographs, phone number and date of birth.

planning tools

Software that assists in setting out tasks, time allocation, resources and responsibilities, often in collaborative work; for example, timeline tools and spreadsheets.

privacy policies

Statements that explain how organisations or parties will use, disclose and manage an individual's personal information. The policies should be designed to ensure an individual's or entity's privacy.

project management tools

Software that supports the planning and tracking of projects; for example, by providing visualisations of the workflow, timeframe and resources involved in completing a project.

R**relationship**

The connection between a stimulus and an effect, which can often be more easily understood when data is visualised; for example, on a chart showing ice cream sales and daily temperatures.

S

search engines

Software programs that help people find information they are looking for online. A search engine searches for and identifies items in its database that correspond with specified keywords.

T

troubleshoot

To solve technical problems by tracing and correcting faults; for example, restarting a digital tool or ensuring that cables are correctly connected.

trusted adults

Reliable people who children feel comfortable talking to if they are upset or need help, including when engaged in online activities. They might include family members, carers and teachers.

trusted groups

Reliable friendship or formal groups (e.g. school groups) in which children feel confident and safe when communicating and collaborating online.

U

unhealthy usage

The use of digital tools in a way that is not balanced or conducive to a person's health and wellbeing; for example, responding to all notification sounds and spending excessive time on-screen.

V

visualise data

To present data in a summarised form to help with communication and analysis; for example, sorting and presenting data as a chart showing spending trends to facilitate financial decision-making.

W

wellbeing (digital)

A person's physical and mental health, safety and relationships when using digital tools. It involves developing and maintaining a healthy relationship with digital tools

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Adapted from: kreinick. (2018). *Young School Student with Laptop on Legs Stock Photo*. Retrieved December, 2025, from <https://www.istockphoto.com/photo/young-school-student-with-laptop-on-legs-gm985126324-267297289>

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