PUNE RESEARCH WORLD ISSN 2455-359X
AN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES SPECIAL ISSUE 1 (OCT 2016)

SURVIVAL SKILLS IN DIGITAL ERA

***MRS. M. PARAMESWARI,** *Assistant Professor, PG& Research Department of Commerce (CA), Hindusthan College of Arts and Science, Coimbatore TN INDIA*
****S. PRIYA,** *M.Phil Research Scholar, PG& Research Department of Commerce (CA), Hindusthan College of Arts and Science, Coimbatore. TN INDIA*

Abstract

Digital literacy involves more than the mere ability to use software or operate a digital device; it includes a large variety of complex cognitive, motor, sociological, and emotional skills, which users need in order to function effectively in digital environments. The tasks required in this context include, for example, "reading" instructions from graphical displays in user interfaces; using digital reproduction to create new, meaningful materials from existing ones; constructing knowledge from a nonlinear, hyper textual navigation, evaluating the quality and validity of information; and have a mature and realistic understanding of the "rules" that prevail in the cyberspace.

Keywords: *Digital Era, Survival Skills, Digital Literacy, etc.*

Introduction

Development of a more clear-cut conceptual framework may improve the understanding of the skills encompassed by the term "digital literacy" and provide designers of digital environments with more precise guidelines for effective planning of learner-oriented digital work environments, This newly emerging concept of digital literacy may be used as a measure of the quality of learners' work in digital environments, and provide scholars and developers with a more effective means of communication in designing better user-oriented environments. This article proposes a holistic, refined conceptual framework for digital literacy, which includes photo-visual literacy; reproduction literacy; branching literacy; information literacy; and socio-emotional literacy. Development of a more clear-cut conceptual framework may improve the understanding of the skills encompassed by the term "digital literacy" and provide designers of digital environments with more precise guidelines for effective planning of learner-oriented digital work environments

Digital Literacy- An Integrated Model of Skills

In 2004, Eshet-Alkalai published a 5-skill holistic conceptual model for digital literacy, arguing that it covers most of the cognitive skills that users and scholars employ in digital environments, and therefore provides scholars, researchers and designers with a powerful

framework and design guidelines. Today, this model is considered one of the most complete and a coherent model for digital literacy and it was also included among the pivotal models for digital learning in the Encyclopedia of Distance Learning. The five cognitive digital literacy skills that comprise the model are:

Photo-Visual Literacy - Learning to Read from Visuals

Writing is a means of communication that uses symbols; in the course of history, it developed from an alphabet of pictures, which used symbols with associative visual meanings to represent words, consonants, or letters, and therefore required a relatively low level of cognitive mediation, to the modern alphabet, which is composed of "meaningless" abstract symbols (letters), and therefore requires a higher level of cognitive mediation. In contrast, the history of visual communication in digital environments reflects the opposite trend, as demonstrated, for example, in computer user interfaces. These developed from text-based, command-guided syntactical interfaces to intuitive graphic user interfaces that implement principles of "using vision to think" and create an effective photo-visual communication that "speaks the user's language". Usability research has indicated that it is easier for most users, beginners and experts alike, to learn from graphic interfaces, because they employ natural visual communication with the user.

Reproduction Literacy: The Art of Creative Duplication

The invention of the printing press by Gutenberg marked a great leap in human ability to copy, reproduce, and distribute information on a large scale. Until then, all written or graphic knowledge was stored in a way that could not be reproduced, in libraries and collections. Some traditions and knowledge were not even in written form, but were passed orally from parents to children. The next great leap in the humans' ability to reproduce knowledge occurred in the twentieth century, with the emergence of computerized digital Reproduction. These new and unlimited possibilities for reproducing and distributing digital information have opened new horizons for scholars and artists, but they have also required the development of a new set of criteria for originality, creativity, and talent in art or academic work.

This arouses profound questions, such as, for instance, to what extent can a person copy or revise an existing work of art or text before it is considered plagiarism rather than an original creation? What are the boundaries of creativity in art? When does a creation become a technical act of reproduction? At a more radical level, it is possible to put these questions themselves to the test—are they even important, or has the time perhaps come for "The author to die" (paraphrasing the well-known post-modern demand), and for us to put aside the issue of originality and authenticity in our intellectual endeavors. Perhaps the most

famous example of reproduction in art dates back to the 1960s and the pop artist Andy Warhol, whose work was largely based on reproduction of single elements (such a cans of Coca Cola).

Branching literacy: Hypermedia and thinking or multiple-domain thinking

Modern hypermedia technology has presented computer users with new challenges of digital literacy. It enabled scholars to move away from the relatively-linear data searches in traditional digital libraries and databases, to knowledge construction from information that was accessed in a nonlinear manner. Until the early 1990s, work in the restricted computer environments, most of which were not based on the hypermedia technology, promoted relatively linear thinking. This was dictated by inflexible operating systems, and by the fact that the users were used to books, and expected to work in a computer-based environment that would imitate the linear book-reading environment. The modern hypermedia environment provides users with a high degree of freedom in navigating through different domains of knowledge, but also presents them with problems arising from the need to construct knowledge from large quantities of independent pieces of information, reached in a nonlinear, unordered manner.

Information Literacy: The Art of Always Questioning Information

Today, with the exponential growth in available information, the consumers' ability to access information by sorting out subjective, biased, or even false information has become a key issue in training people to become smart information consumers. Information assessment is made in almost every work we do in the digital environment, such as data queries or navigational decisions in the web. It is the users' awareness of their decisions that determines the actual quality of the conclusions, positions, opinions, or models that they construct from the information. According to Eshet-Alkalai, the ability of information consumers to make educated, smart, information assessments requires a special kind of literacy skill, which he calls information literacy. Unfortunately, most studies on information literacy skills focus on the information-seeking strategies and habits of users and only a few stresses the cognitive and pedagogical aspects that are relevant to this skill. Information literacy acts as a filter: it identifies false, irrelevant, or biased information, and avoids its penetration into the learner's cognition. Information-literate consumers are critical thinkers – people who always question information, and never take it for granted. It is true that information literacy is not unique to the digital era; it has always been a crucial trait of successful scholars, even before the information revolution. However, in the digital era, with the unlimited exposure of humans to digital information, it has become a survival skill that enables learners to make informed use of information.

Socio-Emotional Literacy

The expansion of the Internet and other platforms of digital communication have opened up new dimensions and opportunities for collaborative learning and information sharing in various forms, as learning communities, discussion groups, and chat rooms. However, alongside the opportunities, these new possibilities also present the user with problems, in a proportion unknown prior to the Internet era. For example, how is it possible to know whether individuals in a chat room are really who they say they are? How can we tell whether a call for blood donations on the net is real or a hoax? Should we open an electronic mail from an unknown person, even if the mail's subject seems to be interesting? It might contain a virus, but then again, it could be genuine. Socially-literate users of the cyberspace know how to avoid "traps" as well as derive benefits from the advantages of digital communication.

These users have a relatively new type of digital literacy, which is referred to in this article as socio-emotional literacy, because it involves mainly sociological and emotional aspects of work in cyberspace. Socio-emotional digital literacy appears to be the most complex of all the types of digital literacy described in this article. In order to acquire this skill, users must be very critical, analytical, and mature, and must have a high degree of information literacy and branching literacy. Much research has been devoted to drawing a socio-psychological profile of users in cyberspace. On the basis of the findings of these studies, socio-emotionally-literate users can be described as those who are willing to share data and knowledge with others, capable of information evaluation and abstract thinking, and able to collaboratively construct knowledge.

Conclusion

Digital literacy can be defined as survival skill in the digital era. It constitutes a system of skills and strategies used by learners and users in digital environments. By employing different types of digital literacy, users improve their performance and "survive" a variety of obstacles and stumbling blocks that lie in the way within this special medium. The literature is inconsistent in its use of the term "digital literacy"; some restrict the concept to the technical aspects of operating in digital environments, while others apply it in the context of cognitive and socio-emotional aspects of work in a computer environment. This article takes a first step towards shaping an integrative conceptual frame of reference that encompasses most of the dimensions of user activity in digital environments, which may serve as a basis for future research on the ever-changing directions of digital culture. Application of this framework may also improve communication among learners and developers, by providing a diagnostic and evaluative tool for use in creating precise, user-directed product. Still, the digital era is not going to disappear, and the need for education to respond to the growing digital tide is rapidly increasing. The educational response to digital culture may vary from

full adaptation to compromising with it or opposing it. It is a forced choice – a decision we cannot avoid. "Avoiding" a decision among the three above possibilities means actually deciding to passively and fully adapt to the new reality. This is indeed the probable default scenario. If that is so, and if the radical hypothesis about the civilization clash is true, it is likely that photo-visual skill, branching skill and reproduction skill will be powerfully enhanced, while the ability for criticism, or indeed, rational thinking of any kind, may deteriorate. Some might take it to be a desired scenario, but if it is, it calls for a conscious decision, rather than being dragged towards it blindly.

Reference

1. Burnett, K and McKinley, E.G. (1998), "Modeling Information Seeking", Interacting With Computers 10, pp. 285-302
2. Morahan-Martin, J., & Anderson, C. D. (2000), "Information and Misinformation Online: Recommendations for Facilitating Accurate Mental Health Information Retrieval and Evaluation". *Cyber Psychology & Behavior*, 3, pp. 731-746.
3. Neumann, M.M., Finger, G. & Neumann, D.L. Early Childhood Educe J (2016), "A Conceptual Framework for Emergent Digital Literacy", pp. 1-9.
4. Eshet-Alkalai, Y. (2004), "Digital Literacy: A Conceptual Framework for Survival Skills in the Digital Era", *Journal of Educational Multimedia and Hypermedia*. 13(1), pp. 3 – 13.
5. Yoram Eshet (2012), "Thinking in the Digital Era: A Revised Model for Digital Literacy "The Open University of Israel, Volume 9,pp. 1-10.