



Canadian Association of Research Libraries

DIGITAL LITERACY FRAMEWORK

Preamble

[Pour la version française.](#)

The CARL Digital Literacy Framework has been created for use by Canadian academic and research libraries to define our role and objectives in an increasingly complex digital world and is informed by CARL's mission to enhance capacity to advance research and higher education. UNESCO defines [digital literacy](#) as the ability to access, manage, understand, integrate, communicate, evaluate and create information safely and appropriately through digital technologies for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship. With our expertise in information tools and landscapes, libraries are uniquely positioned to teach digital literacy to our students. The transformational impact of AI on the information environment adds new complexities, underscoring the need for students to be taught digital literacy with the unique expertise found within CARL libraries. It will be increasingly important that students are able to understand AI in the evolving information context and to use AI tools effectively.

This document builds upon the strong tradition of library instruction within CARL libraries to identify the key elements of digital literacy that have become critical elements of our students' education in using and creating information. It is intended for use within individual institutions to situate the libraries appropriately within new and existing programs of study at all levels, and to offer a framework from which our libraries can work collaboratively to develop instructional materials and programs with relevancy across our institutions. Within institutions, this document will be used to foster collaborations with the library to embed digital literacy development at a programmatic level to ensure that students are developing digital literacy as they proceed through their program of study.

We acknowledge the Council of Australian University Libraries (CAUL) for their [Digital Dexterities Framework](#) and the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) for their [Digital Capabilities Framework](#), as well as the Ministry of Education and Higher Education of Québec for their [Digital Competency Development Continuum](#).

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Discovering Digital Information

Understands

- ✓ the range of relevant software, apps, digital tools, and content.
- ✓ how programs, systems, and networks operate.
- ✓ the distinctions between generative AI tools used for creation and those used for discovery and literature searching.
- ✓ basic concepts in computing, coding, and information processing in order to optimize discovery strategies.
- ✓ digital asset management including storage, preservation, and access of content.

Is able to

- ✓ select and use appropriate software, apps, and AI tools to search effectively and purposefully.
- ✓ formulate successful search strategies using appropriate tools and technologies.
- ✓ evaluate and choose devices, applications, software, and systems relevant to different search tasks.
- ✓ apply critical distinctions among discovery tools.

Understanding How Digital Information is Produced and Valued

Understands

- ✓ why and how misinformation, disinformation, malinformation, and manipulation of information occurs within the digital landscape.
- ✓ how Canadian copyright law applies to digital information and when to choose open access alternatives.
- ✓ how algorithms work and how biases built into digital tools influence the outcome of AI generated searches.
- ✓ the training process that AI technology uses to predict and generate new content.
- ✓ legal, ethical, and privacy guidelines in data collection and use.
- ✓ how personal data may be collected and used.
- ✓ how to control AI tools' access to and use of prompts and other personal data.
- ✓ the First Nations principles of ownership, control, access, and possession (OCAP).
- ✓ individuals and communities should have a role in how their data/information is shared.

Is able to

- ✓ critically evaluate information in terms of its provenance, relevance, value, and credibility.
- ✓ identify the corpus of data an AI tool uses to inform its output; what data has trained the AI tool.
- ✓ analyze and interpret data and other digital information.
- ✓ use learning apps to organize, plan, and reflect on learning.
- ✓ interpret and respond to messages in a range of digital media.
- ✓ think critically about the business models and other potential motivations associated with AI development and the potential influence on AI output.
- ✓ collect, manage, access, and protect digital data.

Applying Digital Information in Creating New Knowledge

Understands

- ✓ information as a social, political, and educational tool.
- ✓ intellectual property (IP), copyright, and licensing essentials.
- ✓ the range of research methods suitable to their discipline and level of study.
- ✓ that the methods and strategies that a user employs with an AI tool can influence the results.
- ✓ storage, access, and preservation of digital assets.

Is able to

- ✓ select appropriate research strategies to solve problems.
- ✓ collect and analyze data using digital tools and techniques and interpret findings.
- ✓ share evidence and findings using digital methods.
- ✓ think critically about methods used to generate output from an AI tool.
- ✓ design and/or create new media (e.g. audio and visual).
- ✓ use digital technologies and techniques to develop new ideas, projects, and opportunities.

Participating Ethically in Learning, Work, and Civic Life

Understands

- ✓ features of different digital media and tools used for collaboration and communication.
- ✓ how digital media and networks influence social behaviour.
- ✓ reputational benefits and risks involved in digital participation.
- ✓ benefits and risks of digital participation in relation to health and wellbeing.
- ✓ opportunities and challenges involved in synchronous and asynchronous learning.
- ✓ personal needs and preferences as a digital learner.
- ✓ there are biases and inaccuracies that can be seen in the outputs created by AI tools.
- ✓ copyright implications when engaging with the development of AI tools or with using AI tools.
- ✓ plagiarism and giving credit for content generated by AI.

Is able to

- ✓ communicate and collaborate effectively in a digital environment.
- ✓ use shared productivity tools to collaborate effectively, produce shared materials, and work effectively across cultural, social, and linguistic boundaries.
- ✓ behave with respect and integrity when communicating with others.
- ✓ act safely and responsibly in digital environments.
- ✓ act with consideration for the human and natural environment when using digital tools.
- ✓ think critically about the results produced by AI tools and understand the social impact of relying on biased results.
- ✓ develop and use AI tools within a legal Copyright framework.
- ✓ to cite AI generated content properly.