Enhancing Access
Understanding Digital Education Leadership

Module 4
Enhancing Access
The Commonwealth Digital Education Leadership Training in Action (C-DELTA) is a programme designed to promote digital education environment in Commonwealth nations. It will engage with governments, educational institutions, teachers, and civil society organisations to assess digital education competencies and provide training opportunities for teachers and students to help them build digital education skills for lifelong learning. It will develop leaders who can demonstrate how to use ICTs effectively and influence others around them to use digital technology appropriately and effectively for learning (and earning) and support sustainable development.

This module is has been developed by the University of Cape Town (UCT) with support from the Commonwealth of Learning (COL). COL is an intergovernmental organisation created by Commonwealth Heads of Government to promote the development and sharing of open learning and distance education knowledge, resources and technologies. UCT is South Africa’s oldest university, and is one of Africa’s leading teaching and research institutions.

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## Contents

About the Digital Education Leadership Curriculum ......................................................... 1  
Overview ............................................................................................................................. 1  
Is modules of C-DELTA suitable for me? ....................................................................... 1  
How Part 1 is structured .................................................................................................... 2  
How Part 2 is structured .................................................................................................... 2  
The module content .......................................................................................................... 2  
Resources ......................................................................................................................... 3  
Your comments ................................................................................................................ 3  
Study skills ...................................................................................................................... 3  
Timeframe ....................................................................................................................... 3  
Assessments ..................................................................................................................... 4  
Margin icons .................................................................................................................... 4  
Acknowledgements ......................................................................................................... 4  

### Module 4: Enhancing Access

Introduction to module ...................................................................................................... 5  
Unit 1: Mobilising resources ............................................................................................ 6  
Teaching and learning resources ...................................................................................... 7  
1. How to access online resources ................................................................................ 7  
2. Identify, analyse and assess online resources ............................................................ 8  
Activity 1.1: Analysing search results ............................................................................. 12  
Activity 1.2a: Finding educational resources ................................................................. 13  
Activity 1.2b: Evaluating educational resources ............................................................. 14  
3. Permissible uses of online resources .......................................................................... 14  
Activity 1.3: Impact of paywalls ..................................................................................... 14  
4. Evaluate the use of the online resources in your context ........................................ 15  
5. Review and revise search strategy ............................................................................. 16  
Creating a communication strategy ................................................................................ 17  
Writing your communications strategy ......................................................................... 17  
Unit summary .................................................................................................................. 25  

Unit 2: Developing digital identities ................................................................................ 26  
Introduction ..................................................................................................................... 26  
Activity 2.1: Your digital footprint .................................................................................. 27  
Activity 2.2: Exemplars ................................................................................................... 27  
Activity 2.3: Issues with digital footprints ..................................................................... 28  
Your digital identity and digital spaces .......................................................................... 29  
Activity 2.4: Digital spaces ............................................................................................ 30  
Your Personal Learning Network .................................................................................... 31  
Activity 2.5: building a PLN ........................................................................................ 31  
How to manage your digital footprint ............................................................................ 32  
Unit summary .................................................................................................................. 35  

Unit 3: Engaging with networks .................................................................................... 36  
Introduction ..................................................................................................................... 36  
Digital citizenship .......................................................................................................... 37  
Activity 3.1: Digital citizenship ...................................................................................... 38
About the Digital Education Leadership Curriculum

The Commonwealth Digital Education Leadership Training in Action (C-DELTA) project is a programme of the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) that intends to promote digital education in the Commonwealth nations. In order to develop Digital Education Leaders (DEL), these modules have been produced by the Centre for Innovation in Learning and Teaching (CILT) at the University of Cape Town (UCT) in collaboration with COL. The Conceptual framework underpinning these modules has been published - see http://oasis.col.org/handle/11599/2442. However some aspects from the Concept Document are foregrounded here to assist you in understanding how the modules are planned and work together.

A curriculum for digital education leadership requires two components: digital education and leadership in digital education, with digital literacies as the basis for both. The two components for the curriculum framework have been developed on the assumption that before an individual becomes a digital education leader, that individual must first demonstrate capability in the practices identified with digital education. In other words, the assumption is that a leader should be able to walk their talk and can only lead if they have the necessary knowledge in the "stuff” to be led. Hence, two linked frameworks have been developed: one addressing digital education and one addressing leadership in digital education.

Overview

The module overview gives you a general introduction to the module. We strongly recommend that you read the overview carefully before starting your study.

Is modules of C-DELTA suitable for me?

Digital education leadership is more than a set of digital abilities or skills; it is a method and set of processes for doing and thinking about digital education. In these modules we seek to develop you as a Digital education leader through fostering your digital literacy, in order to develop your influence of others through your creative pursuits and innovations in the effective use of ICT for teaching and learning. This view goes beyond skills and competencies, although digital education leaders need to be fluent in the use of ICT for learning and teaching. As a digital education leader, you must be able to translate literacy to leadership through questioning the status quo, providing direction and exercising influence.

We assume that leadership is an attribute of an individual and is not related to any position or roles they may have. Digital education leadership, from this perspective, will involve different players at different levels. However this initiative envisages primarily three sets of learners: students, teachers and policy makers.

The modules all contain a number of multiple choice questions (MCQs) that will give you a sense of what concepts you are familiar with and which are new to you. Depending on your prior knowledge you may choose to use these MCQs to construct a personal learning path through the curriculum. However given that the activities within the modules are aimed at helping you develop capabilities and skills in digital education leadership we recommend that even if you are familiar with the content, that you engage in the activities.

The depth and the way you engage with the curriculum is likely to differ depending on your context and prior experience. We anticipate that these modules may be suitable for individuals to undertake as a self-study resource.
In addition, Governments, educational institutions and civil society organisations across Commonwealth countries and beyond may also like to use the framework, curriculum, courses and assessment tool developed in this project for workshops and group training. As the resources are published under a Creative Commons license, you are free to adapt them for your contexts under the license agreement. Many of the activities can be adapted to be done in a group and by working through the MCQs. It is also possible (at an organisational level) for the curriculum to be contextualised and customised for a group process.

How Part 1 is structured
Digital education has been defined here as the process of fostering people's ability to live, learn and work in an evolving digitally mediated society by (i) developing digital identities, (ii) mobilising resources and (iii) engaging with networks.

Part 1 (Modules 1-3) of the curriculum are structured around these three interrelated themes.

Developing digital identities refers to working with the digital tools and networks to which you have access in your contexts in order to enable you to create and manage your own online presences and footprints, and to exercise control over your expression of this digital identity (or identities). By implication, this involves negotiating pathways within contexts.

Mobilising resources refers to the processes of finding out which resources are available to you in your context, which skills you need in order to acquire the necessary capabilities to draw on these resources, the development of understanding of how these resources are used in practice in your particular contexts, and the development of capabilities to evaluate, combine and create new resources.

Engaging with networks refers to interacting with networks in a manner that is meaningful and purposeful. This entails constructively sharing information, knowledge and resources. In the online space, this can entail building on your understanding of the social media ecosystem to enable choices regarding where and how you can create online profiles, interact with people across different networks and build of personal learning networks.

How Part 2 is structured
Part 2 of the curriculum comprises modules 4-7. It focuses on developing you as a Digital Education leader in order to work together with individuals, institutions, communities and networks to foster people's ability to live, learn and work in an evolving digitally mediated society by:

1. enhancing access — i.e., environmental considerations;
2. making informed decisions appropriate to context — i.e., to choose from options in a given context and implement digital education;
3. developing capacity in individuals, curricula and organisations — i.e., operational dimensions; and
4. cultivating innovation — i.e. to reflect being a leader, foster collaboration and networks to accelerate innovation.

The module content
Each dimension comprises:

- An introduction to the unit content.
- Unit outcomes
• New terminology.
• Core content of the unit
• A variety of learning activities
• A unit summary.
• MCQ assessments, as applicable

**Resources**

For those interested in learning more on this subject, we provide you with a list of additional resources throughout the modules these are usually online resources with further links to a range of multimodal resources. We are cognisant of different contexts and the variation in access to the internet and so have tried to provide a range of resources. The curriculum aims to acknowledge histories, bodies of knowledge and thought leaders from a range of Commonwealth countries and is designed to be sensitive to participants’ contexts and experiences. However we are few people and would welcome your suggestions and input in terms of resources and examples. The curriculum is CC BY-SA which enables you to adapt and modify the content and we hope that if you do so you will contribute your suggestions back to us.

**Your comments**

After completing these modules we would appreciate it if you would take a few moments to give us your feedback on any aspect of this module. Your feedback might include comments on:

- content and structure.
- reading materials and resources (including videos).
- activities.
- assessments.
- duration.

Your constructive feedback will help us to improve and enhance this module.

**Study skills**

As an adult learner, your approach to learning will be different to that from your school days: you will choose what you want to study, you will have professional and/or personal motivation for doing so and you will most likely be fitting your study activities around other professional or domestic responsibilities. Essentially you will be taking control of your learning environment. As a consequence, you will need to consider performance issues related to time management, goal setting, stress management, etc. Perhaps you will also need to reacquaint yourself in areas such as essay planning, coping with exams and using the web as a learning resource. Your most significant considerations will be time and space i.e. the time you dedicate to your learning and the environment in which you engage in that learning. We recommend that you take time now—before starting your self-study—to familiarize yourself with these issues. There are a number of excellent resources on the web.

**Timeframe**

As described above, as an adult learner, you will make choices about how deeply you want to engage with the module. This will depend on your prior experiences and context. The modules range between 30 and 60 pages and include 3-6 activities which require further exploration, reflection, engagement and exploration from you. We estimate if you engage fully with the modules it will take you 16-20 hours.
Assessments

Each module also has a number of multiple choice quizzes. This will give you a sense of how well you have understood the concepts and content contained in each module. However it won’t give you the experience and skills you need in order to become a Digital Education Leader. The activities provided in the modules are for self-directed learning and development. Through engaging in these activities you will develop your own digital practices which will provide the basis for your development as a Digital Education Leader.

Margin icons

While working through these modules you will notice the frequent use of margin icons. These icons serve to “signpost” a particular piece of text, a new task or change in activity. A complete icon set is shown below. We suggest that you familiarize yourself with the icons and their meaning before starting your study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Terminology</th>
<th>Summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

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Module 4: Enhancing Access

Introduction to module

In this module, we look at how people can access resources, and we explore both local and global resources.

The world wide web (also referred to as www) can be described as a vast collection of resources. Wikipedia describes it as an information space where documents and other web resources can be found. These documents and resources are identified and located by URLs (or, Uniform Resource Locators) and interlinked by hyperlinks that can be accessed via the Internet.

The internet can be accessed on most devices (like a smartphone, tablet, television set, laptop or computer) and its resources are therefore available to you 24/7 provided you have an internet connection. But having access to resources on the internet is not the same as accessing resources. In fact, even if you have a device with an internet connection, you might never make use of resources available to you for various reasons. Maybe you don’t know how to access the right resources. Or perhaps you don’t know where to find what you’re looking for.

Even though the www has been central to the development of the Information Age and is the primary tool that billions of people use to access the internet, download information, find maps, information, gain knowledge and interact with others online, the sheer wealth of information on it can be very overwhelming and daunting.

Finding the wrong information is just as easy as find the right information. The same principle applies to available resources: finding applicable resources might be easy, but finding the right resource for you and for in your context, isn’t necessarily easy and can be quite challenging.
Unit 1: Mobilising resources

In this unit we look at enhancing access by way of developing your capabilities to mobilise online resources.

Upon completion of this unit you will be able to:

- **demonstrate** the ability to use different communication strategies and platforms
- **engage with** others to find and access appropriate resources for their specific purposes
- **make visible** available local and global resources
- **prioritize** online resources: where to find them, how to access them and how to use them
- **identify** different types of resources and use them responsibly
- **demonstrate an awareness** about equity/inequity of access to resources.

**Online resources:** An online resource is a document, image or web page on the internet that you use for information that is useful for a specific function.

**Word wide web:** The world wide web is an information space where documents and other web resources are located through their URLs and accessed through the internet.

**Internet:** The internet is a global system of interconnected computer networks. It is a network of networks that links a broad network or electronic, wireless and optical networking technologies.

**URLs:** A uniform resource locator (URL) is a web address that references a web resource by specifying its location on a computer network.

**Hyperlink:** A hyperlink, or link, is a reference to data that you can access by clicking on it. It points to a document or specific part of a document.

**Hypertext:** A hypertext is a text or document with hyperlinks. Within the hypertext, you have hyperlinks that point to documents or a specific part of the document.

**PageRank** PageRank (PR) is the first algorithm Google Search developed to rank websites in their search engine results. It counts the number and quality of links to a page and “decides” how important the website it. Based on that outcome, it will list the website in the search results in relation to other websites.

**Algorithm:** An algorithm is a self-contained sequence of actions that need
to be performed to meet a certain goal. For example, an algorithm can perform a complex calculation, or process a large amount of data, through a sequence of simpler steps and actions.

Teaching and learning resources

In our current day and age, technology can be found everywhere and it is therefore very common to use technology for the purposes of teaching and learning. There is a wealth of resources available online (both for free and paid-for) that can aid teaching and learning digitally.

Teaching and learning with the use of technology should never focus on the technology itself but rather on the how and why of using the technology resources.

But before we can determine how and why we should use technology, we first need to find the appropriate and relevant technology resources? How do we know that they are applicable and appropriate for our purposes and contexts? We will have to think of our specific informational needs, search, re-search, and prioritize our findings according to certain criteria that meet our needs.

Let’s have a look at how to:

1. Access online resources
2. Identify, analyse and assess online resources
3. Permissible uses of online resources
4. Evaluate the use of the online resources in your context
5. Strategise/re-strategise, in terms of your priorities

I. How to access online resources

If you Google “teaching and learning resources” you get approximately 25 000 000 results in 0.45 seconds. So now what? Where do you start? Have a look at the screen grab below: you have potentially accessed 25 000 000 resources!
But have a closer look at the results. A google search result page will not necessarily give you what you’re searching for, and will rarely give you resources that are applicable to your specific context. That is why refining your searches is an important part of finding what you are looking for from google.

Understanding how Google search works

You can watch this video to find out more about how Google search works: https://youtu.be/BNHR6IQJGZs.

2. Identify, analyse and assess online resources

Being able to identify and analyse links and URLs at a glance are important critical digital literacy skills. Which result should you click on? There are crucial give-aways at the result page stage that will save you time and effort. Let’s have a look at another example and identify the types of results.

Google “technology for the classroom” - you will get around 278 000 000 results in 0.73 seconds. Now let’s look at the first three types of results:
The first type (1) are online shopping results. These results are where you can buy online resources for the search, online.

The second type of result (2) are paid-for advertisements (‘ads’). It’s easy to tell that these are ads because they are clearly marked as such with this icon 🔍 admission.

The third type (3) is from a website and you can identify this website through its URL that ends in a .com. The fact that this is the first, “real” result based on google’s hierarchical ranking system, indicates that a lot of people have found this site as popular.

Finding information is about knowing what sources are available and how to access and use them. That means that you need to know how to search effectively and independently, and then reflect on the success of your searching strategy.

When you are looking for information, you should try to be clear about the purpose of the information you are looking for. Are you looking for opinions on a particular product? Or are you looking for some statistics you can use for a report?

Once you have a purpose in mind, you will be in a position to concentrate on the most appropriate types of resources that will provide you with information you need.

There are different categories of information and knowing these categories will help you to focus on the type of information you are looking for:

**News or current information**

What’s the latest on X?
Ideas and opinions
What do people think about X?

Research results
What does the latest research tell us about X?

Theoretical analysis/theory
What are the different theoretical perspectives on X?

Facts and figures
How many cases of X were there last year?

History or background
When did X start? What happened?

People's experience
What is it like to suffer from X? What is it like to use Y service?

Persuasion
Is the information trying to persuade you to buy something, think something, or do something?

Online information plays an increasingly important part in terms of all the places and categories listed on this page.

You
Your workplace, college or university
Your local community
National and international
Cyberspace

In order to find the most appropriate types of information for your requirements, you need to be focused on what it is you are looking for. This kind of focus, is a way of ‘prioritizing’, i.e. ranking your interests in order of relevance, importance, urgency, etc.

Consider the following Resource, which is a study of search strategies used in Higher Education.


The study includes reported strategies from a group of South African learners, and perhaps more of
interest to you, some models and approaches (i.e. ‘strategies’) for searching both on and offline – e.g. Bates’s (1979). This will help you develop an idea of (1) what your priorities are, and (2) how to engage resources online to access information that satisfies these priorities.

You can explore different strategies and tactics like

- Broad first keyword search
- To-the-point strategy
- Known address strategy
- Hub-and-poke strategy

Now think carefully about:

- the type of information you are looking for - the category
- why you want the information - the purpose
- the best place to go to find the category of information you are looking for.

Planning this in advance of your search will save you time, and ensure that you find the most appropriate content.

The anatomy of a URL

The URL is made up of different parts, namely, a protocol, host, domain name (which includes domain and subdomain), and sometimes, a directory path and file name (with or without extension).

Once constructed and put together, it looks like this:

```
protocol://host.subdomain.topdomain/dir1/dir2/filename.ext
```

If you google “vervet monkey” into Google you will get a URL that looks like this:

```
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vervet_monkey
```

The protocol is https (Secure Hypertext Transfer Protocol), the host name is en, the domain name address is Wikipedia.org where Wikipedia is the subdomain and org is the top-level domain, the first directory is wiki and the second directory is Vervet_monkey.

Here’s what it all means:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>http</td>
<td>transfer protocol (type of information being transferred)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.googleguide.com">www.googleguide.com</a></td>
<td>website name, host name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>googleguide</td>
<td>first-level domain name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>com</td>
<td>top-level domain name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>searchEngines</td>
<td>directory name (major category)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>google</td>
<td>sub-directory name (sub-category)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>searchLeader</td>
<td>file name (a file within the directory)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>html</td>
<td>file format</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Here’s a list of some common top-level domain names. Note that some sites don’t follow these conventions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.edu</td>
<td>educational site (usually a university or college)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.com</td>
<td>commercial business site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.gov</td>
<td>U.S. government/non-military site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.mil</td>
<td>U.S. military sites or agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.net</td>
<td>networks, Internet service providers, organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.org</td>
<td>non-profit organizations and others</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Because the Internet was created in the United States, “US” was not originally assigned to U.S. domain names; however, it is used to designate American state and local government hosts, including many public schools, and commercial entities, e.g., well.sf.ca.us. The domain .ca represents Canada, unless it’s followed by .us, in which case it represents California.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain Codes</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.ca.us</td>
<td>California</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.nv.us</td>
<td>Nevada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.tx.us</td>
<td>Texas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other countries have their own two letter codes as the top level of their domain names; although many non-US sites use other top-level domains (such as .com):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain Codes</th>
<th>Country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.ca</td>
<td>Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.de</td>
<td>Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.dk</td>
<td>Denmark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.jp</td>
<td>Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.il</td>
<td>Israel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.uk</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.za</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Activity 1.1: Analysing search results**

Look at the search results in this screen grab:
Analyse the results based on the following criteria:
Which result are paid-for content? How do you know?
Which result would you choose as the most reliable / credible? Why?
Which results are academic results that can be used as references for academic papers? How do you know?
What does a URL tell you about the type of site it will link to when you click on it? (e.g. Could you know if it is commercial or not-for-profit site when you read the URL?)

Evaluating Resources Checklist
Now that you’ve selected a URL to click on, and have found some online resources, your job is not done because you still have to evaluate the actual resource.

http://guides.lib.berkeley.edu/evaluating-resources [CC BY NC 4.0]

Activity 1.2a: Finding educational resources
Find a resource that you would like to try and use in your context by going through this list: http://blog.ed.ted.com/2015/09/19/25-awesome-apps-for-teachers-recommended-by-teachers/
Follow the steps above and write a short paragraph about the resource and its usefulness in your context.
Activity 1.2b: Evaluating educational resources

Have a look at the online resources here:
https://learndigital.withgoogle.com/digitalskills/topic-library

Follow the steps above (under Evaluating Resources) and choose a resource you would like to use. Write a short paragraph for your teacher explaining why you would like to use this resource in class, and motivate your reasons. Include an explanation as to the appropriateness and trustworthiness of the resource.

3. Permissible uses of online resources

Once you find a resource applicable to your context and valuable for your purposes, you should also look at other factors such as copyright and licensing – to see if this could potentially be used as a resource for your re-use, inclusion, adaptation, remixing, etc. Some online content and materials are fully copyrighted, meaning that the re-use of them is subject to reserved license-rights from the content authors.

Consider for each resource - Who can use it? Is it legal to copy it? How can you determine this?

Look for copyright information on online-content. If no declaration is given, it is typically under full copyright. Many resources are also only accessible through paid subscription or purchase. Consider the following activity.

Activity 1.3: Impact of paywalls

Case study

Read this article and answer the questions below:
http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2017/04/04/announcing-unpaywall-unlocking-openaccess-versions-of-paywalled-research-articles-as-you-browse/?platform=hootsuite (CC BY 3.0)

a. What is the impact on research when paywalls gatekeep knowledge and information?

b. What is “Unpaywall” and why do you think it’s important?

c. Who benefits from keeping research behind paywalls? Why?

d. Discuss the impact Unpaywall could possibly have in Commonwealth countries, and what the implications for education are.

Perhaps this motivates for the case for ‘OERs’?
**OERs**

Open Educational Resources (OER) are teaching, learning and research materials in any medium that reside in the public domain or have been released under an open license that permits its free use and repurposing by others.

**Creative Commons (https://creativecommons.org/)**

Creative Commons is a set of licenses that helps you to legally share your knowledge and creativity, and share and use the knowledge and creativity of others. These public copyright licenses enable the free distribution of otherwise copyrighted work.

There are 6 types of licenses and they are explained in the image below:

![CC License Types](https://creativecommons.org/faq/)

(Source: https://creativecommons.org/faq/)

**4. Evaluate the use of the online resources in your context**

Now that you know more about OERs, licenses and free online resources, you will still have to evaluate resources to use in your context.

In order to evaluate a resource, you need to establish what you are using the resource for. For
example, if you want to explain a concept in a visual way, one way you can do that is to find a video on YouTube. When you find a video that covers the concept you want to explain, ask the following questions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authority/Credibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who is the author of the source (a person, an organization, or a company)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the author an expert on the topic? To what extent does the author’s occupation, years of experience, position, or education make him/her an expert?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you know about the publisher (e.g. company, professional association) of the source?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does the source try to sell, inform, or try to persuade you of a certain point of view?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is it a commercial, governmental, or educational institution source?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Currency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is the source up to date in relation to the topic?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accuracy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is the information based on facts or opinions?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the author provide any supportive evidence for his/her statements?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there sources listed for any information presented as fact so that they can be looked for to verify the facts?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Criteria for Evaluating Sources, College of DuPage Library, [http://www.codlr.org/research/fundamentals/evaluate](http://www.codlr.org/research/fundamentals/evaluate) (CC BY-SA)

### 5. Review and revise search strategy

If the resource does the job you intended it to do, then it was the right resource to use. But what if you fail with the resource and it doesn’t work? Then you will need to revise your strategy and tactics used for the search.

This is a self-evaluation type process where you can ask others and yourself questions about what worked and what didn’t work; what can be added, changed, different, better, etc. Perhaps you are using too broad or too specific keywords for the search, perhaps you are choosing resources that are too opinion-based without enough facts – think critically about what your priorities are and revise your search strategies to try and get different results.

Creating a communication strategy

Communicating online takes many shapes and forms. Communication is the exchange of information between a sender and a receiver. It used to be that you only had to worry about the way you communicated face-to-face or on paper, but technology has changed this completely.

It is now also important to take into account every aspect of how you are relying information. This is where communication strategies play crucial roles because they are the blueprints for how information will be exchanged.

Communication strategies can be verbal, nonverbal, or visual.

By integrating all the strategies together you will be a successful communicator.

Verbal communication strategies can be broken down into the two categories of written and oral communication. Written strategies consist of avenues such as e-mail, text, and chat. Examples that fall into the oral category are phone calls, video chats, and face-to-face conversation.

Nonverbal communication strategies consist of mostly visual cues, such as body language, facial expressions, physical distance between communicators, or the tone of your voice. These cues are typically not intended. However, it is important to realize the message you are sending. Otherwise, you may be saying one thing, yet the receiver is hearing another.

Visual communication strategies can be seen through signs, webpages, and illustrations. These strategies are used in the workplace to draw attention and provide documentation.

Here is a Step-by-step guide to producing a communications strategy for your organisation. Includes exercises and downloads.

A communications strategy is designed to help you and your organisation communicate effectively and meet core organisational objectives. Here we look at the key elements of a communications strategy as well as how press/PR plans, web strategies and marketing plans fit into your organisation’s overall communications strategy.

Writing your communications strategy

1. Statement of purpose

It is useful to say up front why you have developed a communications strategy and what you hope to achieve with it. This does not need to be very detailed, it acts as a reference and reminder for those using it in their work. For example:

"This communications strategy shows how effective communications can:

- help us achieve our overall organisational objectives
- engage effectively with stakeholders"
• demonstrate the success of our work
• ensure people understand what we do
• change behaviour and perceptions where necessary."

2. Your current situation

The introductory part of the communications strategy should briefly outline what your organisation does, what its main functions are and where it operates. It should also look at your organisation’s communications strengths – what has been successful and what hasn’t worked well over the last five years or so. The following tools can be used to help analyse your organisation’s current situation.

a) PEST Analysis

This involves listing the Political, Economic, Social and Technological factors that could affect your organisation’s work. These could be positive or negative factors and should include issues that are likely to have an impact on how your organisation operates. You should indicate why each factor will have an effect.

For example, under ‘political’ you might include: Change of government: need to build contacts with new civil servants/MPs. Need to understand new policy agenda. Implications for target media.

b) SWOT Analysis

A SWOT Analysis involves listing your organisation’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Think about what this means in terms of your communications priorities. How can threats be turned into opportunities? How can you play on your strengths through effective communications?

c) Competitor Analysis

Another useful tool when assessing your current situation is to look at what your competitors are doing. This can be a relatively simple exercise where you identify your main competitors and rank them against certain criteria. Try to be objective when assessing current strengths and weaknesses.

3. Organisational objectives and communications objectives

Any communications strategy should closely reflect your overall organisational plan. In this section you should look at your organisation’s overall vision and core aims and objectives. You should then suggest how communications can help deliver these goals.
As well as referring to specific objectives, this section should give an overall sense of the principles of communications that underpin the strategy and the key messages that the organisation wants to convey.

It is important that your communications objectives should be seen to contribute to the achievement of the overall objectives of the organisation. In this way they will be recognised not as an “add-on”, but something as fundamental as operational or policy objectives to achieving the organisation’s overall mission.

The example below shows how for a (fictional) homelessness organisation this might work in practice. Each of the organisation’s strategic objectives (from its business plan) can be broken down to show how operations and communications can contribute to delivering the objectives.

**EG - Objective 1: To provide the best standards of care and support for people using our services**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operational or policy objectives</th>
<th>Communications objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To train our staff effectively to work with our service users</td>
<td>To ensure all staff know and understand the standards of care expected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To keep the premises clean and well maintained</td>
<td>To ensure service users know the quality of services they should expect, and know what is expected of them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To provide opportunities for service users to enter education, training or employment</td>
<td>To ensure service users have opportunities to communicate their needs within the organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To regularly gather feedback to ensure we are maintaining standards of care</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EG - Objective 2: To play a key role in the community as a valued provider of services for vulnerable people

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operational or policy objectives</th>
<th>Communications objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To build strong relationships with the local authority and other funders</td>
<td>To provide a regular flow of information to key stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To fulfil contracts with the local authority to provide services for service users</td>
<td>To regularly showcase organisational successes in the local media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To be approached by local media for opinions on availability of services for vulnerable people</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Top tip: Most organisational plans cover for a period of around five years, your communications vision should work to the same timescale.

Top tip: When setting objectives, it’s important to be realistic in terms of timeframes, budgets and resources. It’s also important to ensure they are measurable.

4. Identifying stakeholders

In this section, you should give a detailed description of your main audiences – both external and internal. These might include the public, politicians, service users and staff. You might also refer to potential audiences that your organisation is keen to connect with.

Many organisations will find that they have lots of audiences who they need to interact with. One part of the strategy might look at which audiences will be interested in which parts of
your organisation or activities. Understanding this may make it easier to prioritise your communications work.

In this fictional example, a charity providing advice and other services has looked at what its key stakeholders might be interested in:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>Advice or information</th>
<th>Accommodation services</th>
<th>Policies and practice</th>
<th>Policy and research</th>
<th>Financial accounts</th>
<th>Success stories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board of trustees</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donors</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community groups</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service users</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social services</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another way of prioritising your audiences or stakeholders might be to ‘map’ them. This involves choosing criteria which are important to your organisation and then ranking your different audiences against those criteria. This can help show you which are the most important and therefore the ones on which you should be spending most of your effort communicating. It is often easier to do this analysis with two criteria, so you can highlight the differences between audiences.
Some simple examples of mapping stakeholders include looking at their influence on policy and resources and their interest in your organisation.

**Top tip:** Don’t forget your internal audiences – staff, board members etc. Internal communications is a crucial part of any communications strategy.

Consider the following diagram, as a way of understanding your Audiences, based on their Influences and Interests:

In each of the boxes, there is a suggested prioritisation of communications with these audiences. The key players (top right section) are clearly those you want to spend the most time communicating with. NB - it is likely that some of these audiences will become more or less influential and have a greater or lesser interest in your organisation over time and depending on their interaction with you. So it is worth revisiting this type of exercise periodically to see if the priorities are still the same.

**5. Messages**

Once you have identified your audiences, the next task is to break down your objectives into relevant messages for each of those audiences. Start with the audiences that are the highest priority.

Remember that your messages should be relevant and appropriate to the audience. You might want to speak to your supporters and donors in much more forthright language than you would use for local authorities or other funders. But it is very important that there is a continuity across the messages. It is important that all of your stakeholders understand what kind of organisation you are, so your messaging needs always to link back to your key organisational objectives and values.
The table below sets out some examples of how messages can be tailored to different audiences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>What they need to know</th>
<th>Key communications messages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Service users</td>
<td>- What we offer them</td>
<td>- We provide useful, practical information and support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- How to access our services</td>
<td>- We are trustworthy and reliable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Where to go for advice</td>
<td>- We put services users first and value their opinions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local MP or councillors</td>
<td>- What we want to see changed in policy terms</td>
<td>- We have a strong evidence base and our calls are grounded in robust evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Our strong evidence base and supporter base</td>
<td>- We have a good knowledge of the policy environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- We are a well-respected, authoritative organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporters</td>
<td>- We have the ability to make change if they help us</td>
<td>- We need you to support our campaign by writing to your MP, signing our e-petition, donating to us etc</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Key communications methods

For each audience identified in your previous section, you should now indicate the most appropriate channels for communicating with them. These might include an e-bulletin, conference, workshop, leaflet, press release, event – or broader methods such as media and your website.

There are pros and cons to all of these channels, which once again will vary depending on your organisations needs and resources. Try a simple internal analysis of the channels you
have at your disposal to see which are the best to use for getting specific messages to particular audiences.

Once you have looked at the channels you have, you can begin to construct your communications plan, linking audiences, messages and channels.

For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>Key communications messages</th>
<th>Key communications channels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Service users | - We provide useful, practical information and support  
- We are trustworthy and reliable  
- We put services users first and value their opinions | - Service user e-bulletin  
- Quarterly service user meetings  
- Service user representation on the Board  
- Media training for service users who are keen to act as spokespeople |
| Politicians | - We have a strong evidence base and our calls are grounded in robust evidence  
- We have a good knowledge of the policy environment  
- We are a well-respected, authoritative organisation | - Quarterly policy briefings on specific policy areas  
- Look into creating an All Party Parliamentary Group  
- Ensure all press releases are sent to relevant government department in advance  
- Positive media coverage |

**Top Tip:** for each audience, there will probably be several appropriate communications channels

You may want to include supplementary strategies for your web/online media presence, Press/PR Plans and direct marketing. These will help you go into greater detail about how your organisation plans use these channels to communicate effectively with relevant stakeholders.
7. Work plan

With your audiences and key communications methods identified, the next step is to draw up a table that indicates the key communications activities, budget, and resources allocated to delivering the strategy.

The work plan should also include proposed timescales and identify particular milestones within the strategy. This will allow you to measure clear steps towards ultimate goals.

There may be specific projects, events or publications that you know will take place, and these should be highlighted.

8. Evaluating success

Your communications strategy should conclude with a section on evaluation. What does success look like and how will you know when objectives have been met?

Here you should indicate the tools you will use to evaluate various sections of your communications. These could be simple measures such as the number of responses to e-bulletins, hits to your website or increases in donations following a mail-out. They could be focused on policy changes, for example have the key calls of your campaign been achieved? You could also include measures of media coverage; not only in terms of volume, but also breadth and depth. How often were your key messages mentioned and has there been a shift in public attitude on issues you’ve been campaigning for?

**Top Tip:** include milestones in your evaluation section so that you can measure progress towards ultimate goals.

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**Unit summary**

In this unit you learned about communication strategies and how to use different strategies for different platforms. You also learned about online resources: where to find them, how to access them, how to evaluate them and how to use the appropriately in your context.
Unit 2: Developing digital identities

Introduction

In earlier modules you learned about “Being digital” and how digital tools are used in different aspects of your life. You learned about ICTs and how they impact our lives in many ways, and you looked at some of the positive and negative effects of technology. You also learned about “Digital identity” and how you leave traces of your online activities, or electronic crumbs that collectively make up your online digital footprint.

In this module, we will build on your knowledge and expand your understanding of your digital identities, online profiles and digital spaces, and your Personal Learning Network. We will also examine the importance of being in control of the information about you that’s easily accessible to anyone with an internet connection.

Upon completion of this unit you will be able to:

- identify the pros and cons of your digital footprint
- manage your digital footprint
- utilise various digital platforms to enhance your digital footprint
- demonstrate how to develop, manage and express your digital identities appropriately on various digital platforms
- produce, adapt, edit information that is already out there on the internet.

Terminology

Personal Learning Network (PLN): A personal learning network (PLN) is an informal learning network that is made up of the people you interact with, learn from, and share knowledge with.

Social Handles: A social handle is a username or nickname that you choose to use on social media. It is usually a unique name that can only be used once on that platform.

Blogging: Blogging is when you post a discussion or information on a blog (a type of website) on the world wide web.

Macroblogging: There are two types of blogging: macroblogging is when you blog on a website like Wordpress and there’s an unlimited amount of text space available.

Microblogging: The second type of blogging is microblogging and that is when you have a limited amount of text space available, for example, Twitter.

Content curation: Content curation is when you share links with other people in your PLN through social media.

There is an entire online course you can engage in to develop your Digital Learning Environments, Networks, and Communities. It is part of the MA in Learning and Technology, at the School of Education of the Royal Roads University, and is accessible here: https://malat-
The following sections are meant to introduce you to some of that type of content.

## Your digital footprint

In this day and age we Google everything. Yes, google is just one search engine and there are many more, but it’s the most popular search engine and the most widely used one globally. Google currently has an estimated 1,800,000,000 unique monthly users, and in second place comes Bing with an estimated 500,000 monthly users.

For the purposes of this section, we use the term ‘google’ when referring to any and all search engines.

So when information is readily available on any topic conceivable, you’d hope that the right information is found, right? Have you started to think about you being one of these conceivable topics? Do you know what google says about you? Let’s have a look at digital footprints, and find out more about how important it is to manage what google says about you.

### Activity 2.1: Your digital footprint

Look at this slideshare presentation on digital footprints:

https://www.slideshare.net/LianaMeadon/your-digital-footprint-and-personal-learning-networks (CC BY NC 4.0, Used with permission)

- Google yourself. What is your digital footprint? Are you happy with the results? Is there something you’re unhappy about? Is there something you would like to change?
- Google yourself from a friends’ device. Are the results similar? What’s different?

What does a well-managed digital footprint look like? For starters, it’s should be an accurate representation of who you are, what your interests are, what you find interesting, what you share with others, and what you do online.

Have a look at this video for more information:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NlGyTp4Nd4M

### Activity 2.2: Exemplars

Model footprints: find a digital footprint you’d like to imitate (an intellectual, teacher, someone you admire). What about this digital footprint appeals to you and why? Write a short paragraph to motivate why this footprint example is your model footprint, and list 5 things you can implement today to mimic your model footprint.
Activity 2.3: Issues with digital footprints

Case study

- What happened with the students investigated Ms. Robertston?
- What happened to Ms. Robertson?
- Why did this newspaper article get printed and why are other journalism groups so optimistic about this case?
- What is the editorial policy at your school or college? If you don’t know, go and find out.

Now, Google your teacher, friend, organisation, your school, your university, a website, etc. Did you find anything to report like the students in the case study?

The case study example above is a good example of the importance of fact-checking in this digital age. Face-checking and fake news are two topics that are increasingly in the news these days. Big companies such as Google and Facebook are taking serious steps in trying to combat fake news and make fact-checking easier for internet users.

Being able to recognise fake news and to fact check information are both crucial critical digital literacy skills.

*Digital literacy health check*

Digital literacy refers to the skills, competences and dispositions of using digital technologies to achieve personal, study and work-related goals.

A nice way to think about digital literacies is to look at what the Open University describes the skills, competences and dispositions of using digital technologies.

Their framework has five competence areas:
1. Understand and engage in digital practices
2. Find information
3. Critically evaluate information, online interactions and online tools
4. Manage and communicate information
5. Collaborate and share digital content

How digitally literate are you, and do you know what that means? Have a look at this framework and see what level you are in each of the competency areas:
Fake news and suspicious online content

Unfortunately not all content on the world wide web is informative and useful. There are many sites that you land on that are malicious but luckily, there are signs that you can look out for with suspicious content:

- Excessive pop-ups (boxes and windows)
- Excessive ads
- Partial screen blockers
- Automatically starts playing audio ads
- Prompts you to fill in information to proceed to the next page or part of the article
- Very little text per page of the article
- Headlines rich in clickbait (i.e. catchy titles that exploit the curiosity of the reader to get them to click a link but typically lead them through multiple adverts, pop-up ads and irrelevant content, all with the main aim of increasing advertising revenue).
- It prompts you to download apps
- The site’s URL and email don’t match
- The site is secured: must have https:// and a closed padlock

Could you identify fake news when you come across it? Fake news is surprisingly easy for people to ‘fall for’ on a regular basis. As a reflective engaged digital leader, it could be useful to develop your abilities to evaluate online resources in terms of its ‘truth validity’. Here are some tips for spotting fake news in a quick check:

For more information, see:
https://www.ifla.org/publications/node/11174

Your digital identity and digital spaces

There are countless digital platforms where you can create an online profile that will become part of your digital identity / identities. It is important to remember that you should not focus on the platform itself, but rather what the platform can offer and how you use the platform. There is really no need to join every popular platform just for the sake of joining. For example SnapChat, Pinterest, Instagram, etc. Platforms come and go in terms of popularity and use (do you remember MySpace?); what’s important to remember is that platforms have different uses, benefits and offerings. Some platforms are also known for specific uses and deviating from those will be frowned upon and seen as inappropriate.

For example, when connecting with someone on LinkedIn, you aim to make a professional connection. It is therefore inappropriate to make a connection and to then ask that person out on a date.
The same applies to making a connection on a dating platform such as Tinder and then try and sell something or promote your business.

A digital footprint offers many advantages.

- You can build a positive online presence that showcases your skills, experience and interests. Moreover, with some online sites, you can control the information about you that is publicly available.
- An online profile that includes your CV, for instance on a professional networking site such as LinkedIn, can expand your range of contacts.
- Professional networking sites can give you access to potential employers, whose digital footprint you can also check.
- You can update your profile in a cost- and time-effective way, so make sure to do so regularly.

Some employment sectors (e.g. advertising, public relations and the media) may expect and actively encourage you to have a digital footprint. They may look for examples of your online creativity. For instance, some people create blogs, profiles or videos. Ultimately, it is your personal choice as to what you create, share and build as your digital footprint – in whatever small, large, or even absent way. If you choose to make a digital footprint, there are ways to enhance it.

You can enhance your digital footprint by carefully judged contributions to blogs, news articles and discussions, or by adding reviews to sites such as Amazon. Keeping a positive online presence regularly updated can reduce the impact of any earlier content you may regret, because most internet searches rarely access more than the top few results.

If you use social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, or regularly post photos, videos, blogs and comments, make sure to manage your contributions carefully, since much of the information stored online becomes public by default. Unless you change your privacy settings, your social network pages will come up on a web search.

Anyone who finds out enough about you could potentially impersonate you, so be careful about the personal information you make publicly available. Potential employers have also been known to reject applicants on the basis of information discovered online.

**Activity 2.4: Digital spaces**

There are different digital spaces for different digital practices. Understanding the digital practices appropriate in the digital space is very important and a critical digital literacy skill.

Have a look at the popular platforms below in Column A and see if you can match them with their most appropriate use / function from Column B:
Your Personal Learning Network

In Activity 2.1 you were introduced to the concept of Personal Learning Networks (or PLN). Your PLN is another way of looking at your digital footprint because it will show people what you know, who you know, what you do, how you learn and how you connect with people who share their learning with you.

When you Googled yourself in Activity 2.1, you should have been able to get a good sense of what your digital footprint will look like as a PLN.

What does your PLN look like?
Let’s find out in the next activity.

Activity 2.5: building a PLN

Have a look at this video on how to build your PLN:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A667pINCzwA

(CC BY NC SA 3.0)

Use this template and map your PLN by answering the questions:

Conversation
Who are you connected to?
Which tools do you use to communicate with other learners?
Are the tools public or private? Open or proprietary?
What are the advantages?
How much and how often do you share about you?
How to manage your digital footprint

You are online even when you are not, online. Even if you avoid Facebook and other social media platforms, information about you is still out there. This is because there are actually many ways in which information and data about you can be put online, by other people, organisations, news agencies – public, private or at state-level.

For example, if you are at a public event with media present, you might be photographed and this photo might appear online somewhere far without your knowing.

Well you can manage your digital footprint and PLN or allow someone else to manage it. For example, if your high school decides to publish class photos and photos of sport events and you are in them, that will become part of your digital footprint. Or, if you run a publicly well-known race, it’s likely that your results will be published online. Or if you organise a local charity event and your local newspaper writes a story about it, the paper’s digital edition will publish it online. Or if a friend or relative blogs, Instagram, Pinterest, Facebooks (etc.) about an event that you were part of, you are online.

Your company or school might even create an online profile for you on your behalf to list under their staff profiles.

These are just some examples of how you can be online even if you are not, and the need to take care to cultivate your online self in a way that you would have it grow and develop.
How to change your digital footprint: top 10 tips

Cleaning up your digital footprint is, in many ways, is really easy.

1. Do a name search

As mentioned before, you need to do a name search. You can also try a couple of different spellings, including your middle or maiden name, and adding relevant keywords (such as your location, employer, etc.), can result in pages and pages of your personal data. If you get onto Google and find things that you don’t like, figure out who posted it and go straight to the source. That may be a friend on Facebook on tagged you in a picture you’d rather not have up, or a site administrator published your comment without your consent. Ask to have it taken down first, and if it doesn’t work, check out the security settings for the platform you’re on, if there’s something you can do about it, you should.

2. Read the security agreements

Yes, this is boring but by tightening up all your security settings, you limit what information gets out and clean up your digital footprint. Security policies for sharing websites like Twitter, iTunes and Instagram are constantly changing, so update your understanding of what these companies are allowed to do by reading the new changes. If you don’t like what is out there, just create new settings to tighten up.

3. Change your passwords

Never have one password for all your accounts: diversifying your passwords, is very important and an easy way to keep your information private. Also, don’t use three passwords they rotate around either. Instead, pick something you’ll remember and vary the symbols, capitalization and numbers you add.

4. Install Spyware

Like privacy settings on Facebook, the anti-spyware settings or programs on your computer also need to be constantly monitored to make sure you’re not letting information leak out unknowingly. Download the latest versions, and any updates your computer prompts you to—it’s definitely in your best interest. Don’t have the time to constantly check for changes? Schedule your computer to make these changes weekly or monthly and have your technology work for you. You can also apply this to your phone and tablet, so you’re not sharing your location, or your Paypal account number, unknowingly.

5. Watch what you post

Be very conscious of how you’re posting on the internet because this has a big effect on your digital footprint. When it comes to having a good, positive reputation online it’s just like the playground politics you remember from grade school; “if you don’t have anything good to say, don’t say it” is a great rule of thumb now as it ever was. Instead of leaving a negative comment, just pass it by, and
leave someone a nice text, or a “like”.

6. Mimic good behaviour

Decide what you want your digital footprint to look like. It can be as easy as separating your personal and professional online profiles. Consider using a different name for your more private personal profile, then change the privacy settings on your social networking site so that only your friends can see your personal information. Then remove everything from your public profile that is personal or private, or that might cause potential problems with colleagues, your current or prospective employer, and always avoid posting anything inappropriate (like inappropriate language, far right comments, or jokes). Remember to check and double-check settings, for example, can someone still tag you on your public profile?

7. Use a professional email

Consider starting a new email account and only using that email when you communicate online and with others. Then get into the habit of only using your personal email with friends and family, and never give that email address out to anyone else. Remember that email content can also be searched online and that google never forgets! Be careful of subscribing to mailing lists with your email addresses. So rather futureproof yourself with a new and professional email that will keep your personal and more public, professional lives separated.

8. Influence the search results

If you want to influence the search results, you need to be patient but persistent. For example, if your Facebook profile is the top search result but you’d rather have your LinkedIn profile to be the top result, you will need to use LinkedIn a lot more. Consider giving Facebook a rest for a while and become very active on LinkedIn: post, update, like, share, etc. and soon, you will see that your LinkedIn profile will move up in the search results. The same idea applies to any other platform you want to position differently in the search result. Stop using the ones you want to move down, and start using the ones you want to move up. If you are really desperate to get rid a platform in a different position, then you can also ask your friends and family to search your name on that platform.

9. Maintain your mobile device

Now check your phone and your apps. Do you have apps on your phone that you don’t use? Delete them. Remember to also deactivate old accounts that you no longer use and delete your unused profiles. Next time you download an app, check the privacy settings you set and the permissions you give away. Do you really need to give an app access to your images? Do you have the same settings on multiple devices? Rather be safe than sorry!

10. Maintain your clean-up regime

Yes, getting started with the clean-up is easy, and maintaining it even easier, as long as you make the effort. Now that you’ve done the initial clean-up, set google alerts for your name in case something about you is posted online.
In this unit you learned about digital footprints and why it’s important to maintain one. We looked at personal learning networks, digital footprints and ways to manage them.

We also considered how to use various digital platforms to enhance your digital footprint and take control of the information that is already on the internet about you.
Unit 3: Engaging with Networks

Introduction

Engaging with networks can be very productive. In the previous section you learned about communication strategies that you can now apply to various networks.

There are different types of networks with different opportunities. For example, you can engage in a face to face network at a conference with the other delegates, or engage in a face to face network by joining a student union and attending their meetings.

Then there are online networks such as virtual classrooms, blogs, microblogs, opinion forums, Reddit, and countless other digital platforms where you can engage.

As a digital citizen you can find communities of practice online that share your values, ethics, interests, behaviours and form part of your knowledge society. These communities become part of your PLN and you engage with when you curate content, participate in discussions, collaborate on projects, etc.

Now that you have your PLN mapped out and a cleaned-up digital footprint, you can capitalise on making the most of networks.

Upon completion of this unit you will be able to:

- Identify and engage with learning networks that are relevant to you and your context.

Outcomes

Digital citizen: A digital citizen is a person who uses technology with an intention and mindset that involves political, social, cultural, economic and ethical interests.

Digital citizenship: For digital citizens, digital citizenship is the membership they have as active and engaging citizen-actors in digital settings and spaces.

Digital scholarship: Digital scholarship is when you engage in scholar activities with the use of technology.

Ethics: Ethics are a set of principles, values, morals and world-views that a person holds, and societies share, to guide one through life’s decisions, dilemmas, contradictions, and problems.

Digital ethics: Digital ethics are a set of values and morals that you adopt to guide you while using the world wide web and internet in
digital spaces, more specifically.

**Hacking:**
Hacking is when you gain access of accounts, information, or data in an unauthorised way.

**Digital plagiarism:**
Digital plagiarism is when you take someone’s work from the internet and you copy and paste it into your work and pretend that it is yours.

**Piracy:**
Piracy is when you download or copy something illegally, for example, music, movies, games, software, etc.

**e-Commerce:**
e-Commerce is when you use your credit or debit card online to purchase something, for example, online shopping, buying tickets for a show, or subscribing to a magazine.

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**Digital citizenship**

A digital citizen refers to anyone using information technology. It is an umbrella term that covers a whole host of important issues.

Essentially, it’s the guidelines for responsible, appropriate behaviour when you use technology. But specifically, it can cover anything from "netiquette" to cyberbullying; technology access and the digital divide; online safety and privacy; copyright, plagiarism, and digital law, and more.

Some people who teach digital citizenship have identified nice elements of digital citizenship.

The nine elements are:

4. Digital Literacy: process of teaching and learning about technology and the use of technology.
5. Digital Etiquette: electronic standards of conduct or procedure.

(Based on a resource: http://www.digitalcitizenship.net/Nine_Elements.html)

Resource: See here for a course on Becoming a Digital Citizen -

Activity 3.1: Digital citizenship

Watch this video and answer the questions below:

http://ed.ted.com/on/t1uPUWym

a. According to this approach, are you a digital citizen?
b. What do you think are the most important thing digital citizens should consider when online?

For more resources about digital citizenship, here’s a resource round-up
https://www.edutopia.org/article/digital-citizenship-resources

Digital scholarship

Google is a powerful search tool, and often a simple keyword search is all that is required to get the results you need. But sometimes your search may not return relevant results, or you might have to scan through pages of results to find something useful. What can you do?

Google provides a range of advanced search options, and you may not be aware of these. These advanced options allow you to create more targeted searches, helping you to find the most relevant information quickly.

Once you have typed in your search terms, Google allows you to limit the results by providing filters based on the type of information it thinks you are looking for. You will see the filter bar at the top of the results page. This gives you a quick and easy way to focus your search.

The default information type is All, which gives you a list of unfiltered results. You can return to this option at any time. Other information types are News, Images, Videos, Books, Shopping, Maps, Flights and Apps (please note, some of these categories may vary depending on the internet browser and version of browser you are using).

Google determines which information types would be most relevant to your search. You can get access to the other types of information by using the More option.

If you do use these filters, remember that you are likely to find appropriate results from more than one of the filters. Plan your search carefully to ensure that you don’t miss important results.
Additional filters
At the end of the filter bar, you will see a Tools option. This provides additional filters based on the information type you have chosen.

Google’s advanced search screen provides a range of options to help you target your search, for example narrowing your search to include specific keywords. You can also filter results to only include those updated within a particular date range, or with text in a particular language.

You can access the advanced screen by clicking on 'Settings' on the Google search page (note: this may vary in other web browsers than Internet Explorer).

Google scholar search tips
Finding recent papers
Your search results are normally sorted by relevance, not by date. To find newer articles, try the following options in the left sidebar:

1. click "Since Year" to show only recently published papers, sorted by relevance;
2. click "Sort by date" to show just the new additions, sorted by date;
3. click the envelope icon to have new results periodically delivered by email.

Locating the full text of an article
Abstracts are freely available for most of the articles. Alas, reading the entire article may require a subscription. Here’re a few things to try:

1. click a library link, e.g., "FindIt@Harvard", to the right of the search result;
2. click a link labeled [PDF] to the right of the search result;
3. click "All versions" under the search result and check out the alternative sources;
4. click "Related articles" or "Cited by" under the search result to explore similar articles.

If you're affiliated with a university, but don't see links such as "FindIt@Harvard", please check with your local library about the best way to access their online subscriptions. You may need to do search from a computer on campus, or to configure your browser to use a library proxy.

Getting better answers

If you’re new to the subject, it may be helpful to pick up the terminology from secondary sources. E.g., a Wikipedia article for "overweight" might suggest a Scholar search for "pediatric hyperalimentation".

If the search results are too specific for your needs, check out what they're citing in their "References" sections. Referenced works are often more general in nature.

Similarly, if the search results are too basic for you, click "Cited by" to see newer papers that referenced them. These newer papers will often be more specific.

Explore! There's rarely a single answer to a research question. Click "Related articles" or "Cited by" to see closely related work, or search for author's name and see what else they have written.


Activity 3.2: Understanding citations

In Google scholar, search for “tetanus vaccine”

You will get a result like this:

a. Look at these top 3 results. Which one has been cited the most?

b. If you look at the citations, do you see a connection between the number of citations and the rank of the search results? Explain in a short paragraph how you think Google scholar is ranking its search results.

c. How can you check who cited the first result?

d. How do you find similar articles to the ones listed in the search result?

e. How can you search for older articles on Google scholar?
**Activity 3.3: New search strategies**

Watch this video on amazing google search tricks:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BJLx0an9mUk

a. List the tricks you have never heard about or knew about.

b. Are you likely to ever use any tricks on that list?

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**Internet ethics**

Ethics are a set of moral principles that governs an individual or a group on what is acceptable behaviour. This definition can be broadened to include computer ethics as a set of moral principles that govern the usage of computers, and by default, digital spaces. In the beginning of this module, we looked at resources, copyrights, OERs and creative commons because the digital space offers countless opportunities for sharing content. However, ethical considerations should be governed by ethical applications

*Digital plagiarism*

Plagiarism is one of the major forms of academic dishonesty which has always existed in education, including higher education. For example, assignments submitted by students may turn out to be copied from fellow students or could be taken over, in part or in whole, from existing published works. The use of computers and internet added to the means that students have at their disposal to commit plagiarism. However, they make it much easier to do and much harder to detect.

*Breaking copyright and software theft*

Illegal copying of copyrighted media (texts, music, movies and software programs) is widespread. Very often, people who engage in such activities do not consider themselves to be doing something that is immoral or unethical, but it is. Pirating content

When you are in digital spaces, how you behave must be governed by ethical digital behaviours because how you act and treat others will be part of your digital footprint. If you won’t act a certain way in front of people who know you but you act in a disrespecting way when online, you need to look at your personal ethics.

Here are some ethical behaviours you should be extra careful about:

- Be sensitive to different cultures, lifestyles, religions, races, practices and lifestyles.
- Don’t impersonate someone else.
- Avoid bad language.
- Don’t share personal information.
Download responsibly.

If you have children in your household, supervise their use of the internet and teach them ethical behaviours.

Don’t pick on people online and bully them.

Don’t be a ‘troll’.

**Activity 3.4** Computer Ethics

Have a look at this “Ten Commandments of Computer Ethics”, Created by the Computer Ethics Institute (http://computerethicsinstitute.org/publications/tencommandments.html)

1. Thou Shalt Not Use A Computer To Harm Other People.

2. Thou Shalt Not Interfere With Other People’s Computer Work.

3. Thou Shalt Not Snoop Around In Other People’s Computer Files.


5. Thou Shalt Not Use A Computer To Bear False Witness.

6. Thou Shalt Not Copy Or Use Proprietary Software For Which You have Not Paid.

7. Thou Shalt Not Use Other People’s Computer Resources Without Authorization Or Proper Compensation.

8. Thou Shalt Not Appropriate Other People’s Intellectual Output.

9. Thou Shalt Think About The Social Consequences Of The Program You Are Writing Or The System You Are Designing.

10. Thou Shalt Always Use A Computer In Ways That Insure Consideration And Respect For Your Fellow Humans.

The Ten Commandments of Computer Ethics were first presented in Dr. Ramon C. Barquin's paper, “In Pursuit of a 'Ten Commandments' for Computer Ethics.”

a. Do you agree with this list? Why / why not?

b. Is there anything missing that you’d like to add to this list?

c. Write your own ethical manifesto / code of ethics and list the rules of ethical behaviour you would like to stick to.
Activity 3.5: Piracy

Have a look at this presentation on piracy, then answer the questions below.


a. Why is the law not winning the war on piracy?
b. What are the three lessons from looking at piracy in this presentation?
c. What is the solution proposed?

Rights and responsibilities

As discussed previously, users in digital spaces should behave ethically. Users have rights and responsibilities and new users should be taught how to engage in online practices that are respectful.

Yes, there are practices that are unethical and people do get away with it. But that is also criminal and there are laws and regulations in place.

You have the right to be safe online, and you have the responsibility to keep yourself safe.

Here are a few tips for protecting yourself in digital spaces:

- Never arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone you met online without letting a friend or relative know where you are and what you’re doing. Online dating is very popular and an easy way to meet new people, but you can still be as safe as possible by meeting in a public area, and sending messages to your friend or relative when you leave.

- Never upload (post) pictures of yourself onto the internet or an online service to people you do not personally know.

- Never give out identifying information such as your name, home address, school name, or telephone number.

- Never respond to messages or online bulletin board postings that are suggestive, obscene, belligerent, or harassing.

- If you receive any form of bullying, harassing, suggestive, obscene or belligerent, immediately tell a friend or a relative that you trust. Cyberbullying can be stopped and you can do something about it. It is your right not to be bullied so report the messages.

Online shopping, e-Commerce or online banking

- Use extreme caution when revealing any of your personal identification information on the internet; make sure that you’re on a https site with a "lock" symbol.
- Install and keep your virus software up to date.
- Avoid storing personal information on your computer or on a memory stick.
- Never send any personal information (i.e., your ID number, bank account information) in an e-mail.
- Don’t allow websites to save your bank account details. If you use an online shopping site regularly, make sure that the site does not “remember” your bank account details as these can be hacked.
- Never do online shopping, a form of e-commerce or online banking when using public WiFi.

**Identity theft online**

Identity theft occurs when someone uses personal information like your name, ID number, or credit card number to commit fraud. Identity thieves try to trick you into giving them information by using highly sophisticated e-mails that appear to come from banks, insurance companies, internet service providers, auction sites, and other kinds of websites. These e-mails, which may even look like real e-mails from the company or its actual website, request your personal information in order to "verify" accounts or "clear up" errors that have occurred.

Legitimate businesses will not ask for ID numbers or bank account numbers on the internet. Never respond to such e-mails and do not click on any links they contain.

If you think that someone has used your personal identifying information to commit fraud or obtain credit in your name, you should:
- file a police report about the events.
- contact the creditor to request more information and copies of documents about the fraudulent transaction, enclosing a copy of the police report.
- phone your bank and report the fraud.

**Free speech in digital spaces - what you can and cannot say or post**

Depending on which area of the world you live in, freedom of speech isn’t guaranteed. In some places, the internet is heavily censored and you can get into serious trouble for saying the wrong thing online.

Here is a short video that explains freedom of speech:

[https://youtu.be/Zeeq0qaEaLw](https://youtu.be/Zeeq0qaEaLw)

In most cases a statement about someone or a business that is made on a website is viewed under traditional libel, slander, and defamation standards.

Usually a negative statement of opinion about someone or a business does not give result in legal action. So if Sam Schmitt goes on a public forum and says that you are a miserable human being, there is nothing you can do. The statement is too general and is a matter of opinion.

However, if Sam Schmitt says that you are a criminal or a child molester, that is actionable because it is no longer a matter of opinion or a general statement but an accusation. You can then take legal action.
Activity 3.6: Future online identity

Imagine that you are ten years into your career. What kind of image and identity would you like your networks of colleagues, employers, employees, and publics, to see? List ten things you are happy with on your social media networks now, which of these you might reduce or archive by the time you reach your 10th career year, and what ways your should have grown by this point - ideally speaking.

Activity 3.7: Social media failures

Read this article from the Rolling Stone magazine on 17 of the most offensive and dumb Twitter, Facebook and Instagram fails, then answer the questions below.


a. Choose one of the 17 examples from the article and explain why it was unethical and irresponsible.

b. If you were the employer, what actions would you have taken for your chosen example?

c. Do you think this is ‘social media stupidity’, or ‘social citizen discrimination’? That is, is it like the difference between committing a crime privately, and getting found out that one has committed a crime?

Discuss one of the cases along the following themes: Is it that this person posted their attitudes, thoughts and statements to the digital public that is problematic? Or is it that as a person in society, people have these attitudes and thoughts about each other and the world, and go on to make statements such as these in private. What is the digital public media space showing us, revealing, exposing, about the attitudes and actions of people that have previously been kept, in ‘private’?

How do we engage our public networks to bring about social change at private and closed-off areas?

How do we bridge the gaps between our public identity and private identity, through the use and access of digital network and media spaces?

Your rights and responsibilities in digital spaces are not always respected by other users.

Even if you are really careful with your personal information, never click on suspicious links or keep your software up to date, you can still be a victim of hacking.

A hack (or hacking) occurs when someone gains unauthorised access to your computer or server or both. This can be through code, stolen passwords, or through someone else’s site on a shared server.
Have a look at the different types of unethical hacking:

https://www.slideshare.net/sairanisakoji/hacking-its-types

Hacking doesn’t always have to be something negative. There are ethical hackers whose job it is to hack.

For example, ethical hackers test security systems, banking systems, websites, etc. and improve the systems when they find flaws or glitches. They test systems and will then contact manufacturers to point out what they find.

With technology becoming more sophisticated and prevalent in homes, schools, shops, cars, buildings, etc. more devices become hackable.

**Activity 3.8: Hacking**

Have a look at this video on 10 things you didn’t know that can be hacked and then answer the questions below:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vQy5v0MIwjo

a. List 5 things that you did not know that can be hacked.

b. What is the difference between ethical and unethical hacking?

**Unit summary**

In this unit we considered that engaging in networks could be the vehicle for change at education sites. We considered that networking is important and for digital citizenship.

You also learned that engagement opportunities are available through networking, and that you can become an educational leader.

You learned that internet ethics are an important aspect of network engagement and that you have rights and responsibilities in digital spaces.

**Assessment**

1. The process by which a search engine conducts a complex search to bring you list of results, in order of relevance.
   A. Algorithm
   B. Google
   C. PageRank
   D. Hyperlinking
2. The specific calculation Google created in order to sort websites for relevance based on user searches:
   A. Algorithm
   B. Hyperlinking
   C. PageRank
   D. PageRating

3. Name the main search engine on the internet:
   A. Google
   B. Bing
   C. Baidu
   D. Yahoo

4. Google search results are affected by:
   A. The machine you use
   B. Your online activity
   C. Availability of information
   D. Formats of the digital information

5. If I am looking for educational resources, it is best to start with which of the following online resources:
   A. Google
   B. Bing
   C. Flickr
   D. A and B

6. When using Google, the topmost search results that appear:
   A. Are what others have found most useful.
   B. Are curated by Google's researchers and represent the latest trends in your topics.
   C. Are what others have clicked on the most
   D. All the above

7. The following can be used to search strategically online:
   A. Broad first keyword
   B. Searching for a hashtag, such as #FeesMustFall
   C. Boolean logic
   D. All of the above

8. For the following URL: “https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vervet_monkey”, the protocol is:
   A. https
   B. en
9. For the following URL: “https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vervet_monkey”, the subdomain is:
A. https  
B. en  
C. wikipedia  
D. org

10. For the following URL: “https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vervet_monkey”, the topdomain is:
A. https  
B. en  
C. wikipedia  
D. org

11. For the following URL: “https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vervet_monkey”, the first directory is:
A. org  
B. en  
C. wikipedia  
D. wiki

12. The domain of the website https://creativecommons.org/ is stored as an
A. Non-profit organisation  
B. Commercial business  
C. Network organisation  
D. International site

13. The domain of a university website will normally include
A. .ac  
B. .edu  
C. .gov  
D. A and B

14. The domain of a governmental website will include
A. .ac  
B. .com  
C. .gov.  
D. .edu
15. The domain of a network organisation is stored as an
A. .net
B. .com
C. .gov
D. .edu

16. If a website you land on automatically starts playing audio ads in other
web-browser tabs, it is likely to be an instance of
A. You’ve clicked on clickbait
B. Your Anti-virus working
C. You’ve landed upon fake news
D. A or C

17. If a website you land on asks you to install a program, app or sign up for
a service before you access it,
A. You’ve been hacked
B. You’ve landed upon fake news
C. You’ve clicked on clickbait
D. You need to be careful of any harmful installation

18. LinkedIn is most appropriately used for
A. Sharing videos
B. Professional networking.
C. Curating content
D. Online messaging

19. SnapChat is most appropriately used for
A. Backing up and archiving chats
B. Sharing photos.
C. Sharing music
D. Posting updates, news, pictures

20. Twitter is most appropriately used for
A. Share videos
B. Share news
C. Post updates
D. All the above

21. YouTube is most appropriately used for:
A. Share videos
B. Online messaging
C. Professional networking
D. Share photos
22. SlideShare is most appropriately used for:
A. Share videos
B. Online messaging
C. Professional networking
D. Share presentations

23. Instagram is most appropriately used for:
A. Share videos
B. Share photos
C. Professional networking
D. Curate content

24. A person who has developed the skills and knowledge to effectively use the internet and digital technologies, who uses digital technologies and the internet in a responsible and appropriate way in order to engage and participate in society and politics, can be described as:
A. Digital citizen
B. Citizen
C. Policy-maker
D. Student

Check Your Progress: