DIGITAL LITERACY: ASSESSING PERCEIVED DIFFERENCES AMONG COMPUTING STUDENTS FROM TWO NEARBY UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract

The objective of this research is to explore the similarities and differences in perceptions of digital literature abilities by computing students in two large universities. One campus is in a large urban area, and the other is a suburban green campus nearby. This research is part of an ongoing examination of digital literacy among various undergraduate majors and demographic groups. The assessment instrument used to measure differences in perceived digital literacy is a 10 item survey based on Renee Hobbs’ digital framework. The Hobbs Digital Literacy Model suggests the following ten characteristics of a digitally literate person.

1. The ability to analyze messages in a variety of forms, including identification of the author, purpose and point of view of the message.
2. The ability to evaluate the quality and credibility of content in a message (e.g., distinguishing between “a marketing ploy for nutritional supplements and solid information based on scientific evidence” or quality content and junk journalism).
3. Knowledge of and the ability to use powerful search strategies.
4. The ability to develop multimedia creations.
5. The ability to use the Internet to connect with others with shared interests.
6. The ability to reflect on online conduct and online social responsibilities.
7. The ability to use the power of communication as a tool for advocacy.
8. Understanding of “copyright”.
9. The ability to apply social responsibility and ethical principles to communication behavior.
10. The ability to work collaboratively to solve problems in the civic sphere, which will require many of the other capabilities listed above.

This research extends the original study population by including computing majors from a second university. Research from our original single university study was recently published in The Global Journal of Business Pedagogy, published by the Institute for Global Business Research, as well as in several conference proceedings. We collected the data for this segment of the research study in spring of 2019.

This research also focuses on differences among various demographic populations. For example, previous demographic results found that male students are significantly more positive than female students in their ability to: a) evaluate the quality and credibility of content in a message; b) use powerful search strategies; and c) use the Internet to connect with others with shared interests.

References:

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