



INTERNET LITERACY

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ABSTRACT

The Internet plays a crucial role in our daily lives, transforming the way we work and offering easy access to wide range of information. The Internet and mobile media continually feed us with information and enable us to connect with one another. Internet literacy involves using the new information and communication media to evaluate and sort out information. It has emerged as one of the key factors accounting for online engagement. This paper provides a brief introduction to Internet literacy.

Keywords: *Internet literacy, Internet skills, Digital literacy, Computer literacy, Information literacy, Cyber literacy, Electronic literacy, Digital divide.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The Internet revolutionized the way we learn, work and play. It has interconnected PCs and laptops around the globe. Wireless technology frees laptops to be mobile. Recent development of various Internet tools has changed the usage of Internet in our daily lives. On a regular basis, people use email, instant messaging, Word, and PowerPoint.

Scholars have defined Internet literacy (or information literacy, cyber literacy, computer literacy, etc.) in different ways. They have defined it as the ability to access, understand, and produce information [1]. Those who possess information tend to dominate in a digital economy. Access and ability are important factors needed to fulfill the potential of Internet usage. Increasing accessibility and usage of Internet technology are important for reducing the digital divide.

Internet literacy is the umbrella term that covers traditional literacy, computer literacy, and information literacy. Internet literacy does not replace traditional literacy but builds on it. While traditional literacy involves the ability to read, write and think critically, Internet literacy involves having the skill to use digital devices (such as desktop PCs, tablets, and smart phones) which are

interconnected rather than stand-alone devices. Internet literacy is proficiency with computer and Internet applications. It requires skills that are interdisciplinary in nature [2].

II. BENEFITS OF INTERNET LITERACY

A low level of Internet literacy constitutes a major advantage in knowledge acquisition. Schools are increasingly expecting students to be Internet literate to keep up with newly emerging technological developments. Students of every discipline are required to know how to use the Internet. Internet literacy enables people to communicate and keep up socially. With the advent of the Internet and search engines, one can easily find a lot of information about a given subject. Websites like Facebook and Twitter foster group interaction among the Internet literate. More and more jobs require fundamental knowledge of the Internet to perform basic functions.

Studies have indicated that Internet use declines with age and younger generations are more involved in using new emerging technologies [3]. Young people have never known life without the Internet; they feel at home with it. Web or Internet technologies are replacing television, telephones, movies, and newspapers as alternative means of information and entertainment.

Internet literacy can have a noticeable effect among people with disabilities (elderly, poorly educated, unemployed, etc.) because information can isolate them and place them in disadvantaged situations leading to social inequality [4]. Studies have also shown a connection between Internet literacy and political participation or civic engagement. Internet skills are rapidly becoming necessary for active participation in a democratic society. Developing nations are promoting Internet literacy to compete globally. Some of these nations face some challenging problems of lack of electricity, community politics, and cultural beliefs.

III. BECOMING INTERNET LITERATE

Internet literacy is gained primarily by using the Internet. People acquire their Internet literacy in two ways. First, they learn informally at home or workplace, from family members, friends, or co-workers. Second, they learn formally through school programs. Internet literacy courses are typically offered by several university departments including computer science department, computer engineering department, computer centers, and university libraries. Such courses include topics such as HTML, FTP, and Web design and other topics such as Internet history and Internet technology. It is commonly presumed that the students are already computer literate [5].

IV. CHALLENGES



The Internet facilitates access to information. However, there are potential problems associated with Internet literacy. First, there is information overload. As the web evolves, an increasing amount of information is available on the Internet. The number of websites continues to grow their poor organization may make obtaining relevant information difficult. Associated with information overload is the concern about the quality of information on the Internet. Since anybody can post to a website, the information posted may be inaccurate or dangerous [6]. Second, people who are addicted to the Internet often make frequent, heavy use of it. They may be involved in instant messaging, social media, ecommerce, and online games. Internet addiction is staying online, for pleasure for a long time. It can destroy families, careers, and relationships [7]. Third, the Internet makes some demands on the understanding of its users. The Internet technology is complex and changing. Internet literacy requires technology use in different contexts. Unfortunately, older adults often lack the skills.

V. CONCLUSIONS

With the growing importance of the Internet, many questions arise concerning the skills required to use it effectively. Traditional literacy is no longer enough for those who want to take advantage of the opportunities the Internet offers. Internet literacy refers to one's ability to use the Internet, mobile and computing technologies to filter through information to achieve a purpose. This may involve searching, collecting, and evaluating content. It is hoped that Internet literacy will enhance overall life quality.

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