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SAT: The Digital Literacy Cookbook (Cara Saul)

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[Dr Simon Ball](#)

5 February 2014

The Digital Literacy Cookbook

Politicians and the Media have high expectations of the opportunities afforded by digital learning, encouraging teachers to help students become digitally proficient to gain competitive advantage. But exactly what skills are needed to succeed in the digital environment? Should we be encouraging learners to become more Digitally Literate? If so - what does being Digitally Literate mean? Does Digital Literacy widen participation and allow inclusion?

Often researchers have explored the devices people are using, but they may not be using the devices to learn or learn effectively. In addition technology and software are a constantly changing environment. So any survey results may be a little stale, and nutritionally may not be that satisfying and wholesome. Perhaps what is needed is to share the skills and approaches to digital learning - not just it's ingredients? So learners can codify the skills and approaches that will help them succeed?

This conference paper looks at what the key digital literacy skills and approaches might be - using case studies, personal opinions and research. It seemed appropriate to use a cooking metaphor to explore Digital Literacy because today's digital scholar is very like a cook, who mixes and creates tasty things to share. Mary Berry and Paul Hollywood continually emphasise the importance of learning key cooking techniques. In 'The Great British Bake-Off' - digital scholarship also requires skills to facilitate learning. So calling my artefact, presentation and paper "The Digital Cookbook" seemed an appropriate and informal way of introducing the content in an accessible manner. The metaphor also worked well with contextual issues like environment or location, formal and informal learning, the age and stage of learners and inclusion. In fact making food for people is about inclusion - this presentation will review and share some recipes.

Extra content

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[Cara Saul](#)

12:31 on 15 February 2014

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Slideshare of the Digital Literacy Cookbook presentation at the H818 Conf 15 Feb 2014

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[Jo Jacob](#)

8:35pm 10 February 2014 [Permalink](#)

There was a fascinating Twitter-row going on today concerning educational technology and digital literacy in the Further Education sector, and what the government has or hasn't said about it. It is interesting to watch grown men have a proper huff! This will be a very timely presentation with hopefully some ideas about how to talk to people about digital scholarship.



[Nicola Morris](#)

9:29pm 12 February 2014 [Permalink](#)

The cookbook analogy would work really well in a school setting as it highlights the need to mix your skills as required. Your draft site looks good as well.



[Dr Simon Ball](#)

7:26pm 15 February 2014 [Permalink](#)

Following the live presentations, we asked each speaker to respond to questions posed by audience members. In the short time available, it was not possible to put all of the questions submitted to the speaker for a response. We asked all speakers if they would respond to the unanswered questions here on Cloudworks. Here are all of the questions asked during the session:

- ▶ Love these personas. Why the more limited diet for teens?
- ▶ If this isn't a book then please, please write it.
- ▶ Should digital immigrants actually be called digital migrants as we can migrate to new areas of the digital world once we are part of it?
- ▶ I remain very befuddled by the 'Digital Literacy' drive but see that it is important and that the title is apt. It does matter. And we ought to look around us and support those who are disengaged or getting behind??
- ▶ anyone can be creative, your presentation is invaluable and could be used in any environment to promote creativity
- ▶ If support is critical, does that diminish the role of OER?
- ▶ Did you have a view on WHO or WHAT provides the support? Peers, educators, machines?
- ▶ Do you think the early adopters of digital devices are aware of any

undeconfidence?



[Sarah-Louise Quinnell](#)

10:44pm 15 February 2014 [Permalink](#)

Cara, firstly your presentation was stunning!

When i worked with Google I was surprised how little they used their own technology which was interesting when you were talking about your Google Kids.

Do you think the BYOD era has improved digital literacy or has it confused things by merely expanding the gap between those who have access to technology and those who don't?



[Cara Saul](#)

2:46pm 17 February 2014 (Edited 3:14pm 17 February 2014) [Permalink](#)

Sarah - Thanks for your kind comments. Found it quite scary presenting online. So much more to think about than face-to-face!

Re: Google kids - I think that many people do not use the full functionality of technology if the basics suffice. And secondary school kids are very constrained by VLEs and inexperience in research techniques. If you were to construct a forces diagram for their online learning then safety and control would be very important. Their digital environment is consequently enclosed and constrained. This does not help students when they make the transition to higher and further education.

Re BYOD era - it is quite confusing. People are trying many different approaches and the digital divide does have an impact, However how much depends on where you live. If you are in an environment or country where there is a near or total lack of technology, you will never reach a critical mass of tech for people to gain/share any benefit. Had chat recently with someone working in India about this. But in most schools or educational establishments BYOD can be made to work for the benefit of all. By sharing (very important in group projects learning) or focusing on helping those who have problems affording tech & access. Also using places where access can be facilitated, like libraries. Not perfect but infinitely better than excluding devices I feel. Have some BYOD links I have found useful I will try to add them above.



[Helen Johnson](#)

1:29am 18 February 2014 [Permalink](#)

Cara, your presentation and trailer are fantastic. I really enjoyed them.

I'm really interested in this topic and I'll be following your cookbook. I'm loosely involved in a few projects at the moment that span the whole range, from a school that has recently and very successfully introduced BYOD for their older kids (it's a relatively affluent school, and all the children have a device of some sort) through to a very rural community getting the internet for the first time. Where you even start then? The parents need to know so much, from basic ICT through to how to keep their kids safe online, combined with very

low literacy levels and a minority language. Any sort of guidance would be helpful.

Are you aware of any projects where people are discovering computers and the internet for the first time and how best to approach it?



[Clem Wilkinson](#)

1:19pm 18 February 2014 [Permalink](#)

Hi Cara,

Really enjoyed your presentation and it's great to see how much content you have made available here. Looking forward to putting some time aside to study it.

I would second the call for a book. I've been reading Doug Belshaw's '[The Essential Elements of Digital Literacies](#)'; now at version 0.9 it's been interesting to get the updates as they have been written. (You pay less the earlier you buy in. Guess you want to be confident the author is likely to finish). I could see The Digital Literacy Cookbook working in a similar fashion perhaps..? Doug's currently moved on to working on the Web Literacy Map and I think his latest Slideshare covers how [Digital Literacies and the Web Literacy Map](#) fit together really well. Naturally (I feel), it also mentions Open Badges. There are also some useful links to other sites on the subject of Dig. Lit.



[Ian Hoffman](#)

3:32pm 19 February 2014 [Permalink](#)

Hi Cara

Do you think Digital literacy sits outside of, what we in Scotland are calling, Information and Critical literacy? It seems to me, especially when talking about online learning/MOOCs/using OERS that it is difficult to mention one without the other.



[Susan Hobbs](#)

7:42pm 19 February 2014 [Permalink](#)

Your presentation made me really think about the topic for my own, and I can see links with your different groups of people engaging in different ways. I think I may well be citing your research within my own when I move forward with my artefact on forum use.

Many thanks



[Cara Saul](#)

2:03am 20 February 2014 [Permalink](#)

Ian - I felt that a tin hat was needed to discuss Digital Literacy! There were so many people laying claim to it's definition and how it should be implemented. However I feel that Information and Critical Literacy are part of Digital Literacy, that learners need core computing skills and social skills as well, to allow students to 'take part' or

function successfully. I liked the way Johnson and Anderson (2005) described information literacy in the context of some of these study skills. However I did wish that they had employed a diagram(s) to expand and clarify their meaning. Perhaps like FutureLab's [Components of Digital Literacy](#) or those produced by the [JISC Design studio](#). However any description or implementation needs to look beyond what people need for school and university - learning is expanding beyond formal learning environments and establishments.

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[Cara Saul](#)

3:32pm 20 February 2014 (Edited 3:38pm 20 February 2014) [Permalink](#)

Answers to questions passed on by Simon

Love these personas.

If you would like to look at personae in more detail this concept is used extensively in software design and in learning design <http://www.ld-grid.org/resources/representations-and-languages/personas>. Lots of interesting academic work on the topic by Yishay Mor or have a look at Open University course H817.

Why the more limited diet for teens?

Most UK secondary schools use a VLE 93% (Davies 2010) whilst they undoubtedly improve learning and can save time for teachers they do mediate learning for users. Schools are very mindful of their duty of care (e-safety) and are very focused on delivering qualifications - so they can have a narrowing effect. In the Pew survey in the US teachers said that secondary school age learners are more likely to use Google as their search mechanism of choice rather than a wider range of online sources. 94% will use Google in a research project whereas only 17% will use online databases, 16% will use a librarian and only 12% will use a printed book. They cited filters and mobile and technology use policies as key barriers. Summary at <http://www.pewinternet.org/2012/11/01/how-teens-do-research-in-the-digital-world/>

Should digital immigrants actually be called digital migrants as we can migrate to new areas of the digital world once we are part of it?

Yes I think this is a much more elegant and accurate description.

I remain very befuddled by the 'Digital Literacy' drive but see that it is important and that the title is apt. It does matter. And we ought to look around us and support those who are disengaged or getting behind??

I think that government recognition of the importance of digital engagement shows that it is very important to social and economic well-being.

Anyone can be creative, your presentation is invaluable and could be used in any environment to promote creativity

Thank you - I agree it is important to be able to 'play', experiment' and develop (Seely Brown). I have been surprised how much I have learnt from this conference. Researching and creating content obviously allows a personal learning experience, but sharing work in progress in the design studio of H818 allowed us to watch and discuss with one another, as we researched planned and created. However the conference was (for me) the best bit because there was such a wide variety of presentations (content and delivery). It is going to take me quite a while to codify all that I have learnt over those 3 days. It was well worth the wobbles of technology to get there. I was very interested how much the lack of visual feedback from an audience unnerved me, but very useful learning experience.

If support is critical, does that diminish the role of OER?

No but think it may inform how it is used. Perhaps OER is the 'wholesale supplier' in my Cooking/food metaphor - rather like Gayle Hudson explained Open University in Wales provides the huge resources of OpenLearn mediated by champions and local learning organisations <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d2cBxOxG4gA>

Did you have a view on WHO or WHAT provides the support? Peers, educators, machines?

No - but I did like the learning champions idea, as it was less like school. If we want to widen participation - it needs to include people who have found existing methods have not suited them. So I think it could be all the things you suggest - Peers, mentors, educators even machines/software. However these things need good learning design and funding - so educational, charities and encouraging those with skills to help to volunteer. As well as professionals and government funding. So a variety of business plans and methods of delivery possible.

Do you think the early adopters of digital devices are aware of any undeconfidence?

Not sure if I have understood the question but do those that are proficient find it difficult to understand those that are less confident? I suppose it depends on the individual?

But looking wider I think that good user interfaces are important. As they allow novices to operate successfully. But with the ability to unlock more complex functionality as they progress. But most important there needs to be more discussion amongst learners about 'how they learn'. I know I have picked up a lot of useful strategies and methods from H818, that I will adapt to other parts of my learning.

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[Claire Griffiths](#)

11:05pm 24 February 2014 (Edited 11:07pm 24 February 2014) [Permalink](#)

Cara

I think the value of the promotion of digital literacy is in funding for equipment. Recently I have spent quite a time explaining that netbooks do not replace desktops or laptops. One does not replace the other.

Did you hear the programme on Radio4 tonight about replacing teachers with computers in the US? Fascinating discussion. Virtual classrooms, replacing some teachers with 1.1. computers and pay the teachers on results up to \$100,000 per year. It mentions the Khan Academy and Rocketship School. To give balance they do visit a Waldorf School with no computers until the age of 13 to encourage creativity.

Monday 24 February 2014 Radio 4 My teacher is an app
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b03w02sj>

Rocketship school in San Jose <http://www.rsed.org/>

What do you think?



[Cara Saul](#)

12:36am 25 February 2014 (Edited 12:37am 25 February 2014) [Permalink](#)

Claire

Thanks for the links to the Radio 4 Programme will settle down to listen to it later on as bedtime listening. Rocketship programme sounds very similar to blended learning ideas in this [report](#) supported by the Joyce Foundation that operate in the Great Lakes area in the USA. Both feel that technology needs great teachers, but suggest changes in organising how these teachers are used and paid. Not sure if I agree with all their ideas, but I do agree that technology alone will not improve performance in disadvantaged groups or wave a magic wand over poor performance. Teachers and pedagogy key.

Your comment about different technology netbooks, desktops and laptops not replacing one another was very interesting. At home I use my available technology according to its affordance and capabilities - with some uses overlapping like email. I can see this would be true of educational packages, it just had not occurred to me before.

However one thing has bugged me about primary schools and technology - that they often discard equipment when new shinier toys arrive. So perfectly useful software and learning activities are lost and abandoned: reading packages, language and maths games that are not out of date. Happening a lot as tablets are replacing netbooks and laptops. Guess I just hate waste.



[Claire Griffiths](#)

7:07pm 26 February 2014 [Permalink](#)

I remember when the computer was on a separate table in the primary classroom as something the children used. On it would be installed the programs you mention along with the relevant disc if it needed to be present for the programme to work. Now in most classrooms the computer is on the teachers desk or locked to the smartboard for the use of the teacher during lesson time. The teacher is logged into her/his email for the day, has work open for each lesson e.g. a smartboard file of a video lined up and is not likely to relinquish it for a pupil to use. Particularly as each would have to log out and in (as they should).

So we are left with the netbooks with half the screen size of the average desktop or laptop. They do not have the same software installed in them. Many have no CD/DVD drive to allow an older game which may need that to work. Netbooks will run programs installed on the network but our Applications drive is full. I agree that the programs are being thrown away. I hold onto a wonderful Sherston handwriting template program and Virtual Thesaurus, which I love. Seems a bit of a rant this but luckily I am involved in a national organisation (CAS) so I can shout loudly and can be heard.



[Cara Saul](#)

7:41pm 1 March 2014 [Permalink](#)

Claire

Your assessment of technology locked away or mainly being used by the teachers, echoes the accounts I received from all the secondary children I interviewed. I agree with your assessment that netbooks have been very unsatisfactory investment. Not helped by having unrealistic depreciation applied. Maintenance contracts also cause many problems - stand alone computers to play useful software often not tolerated or rendered expensive by inclusion in maintenance costs - even if they are never touched by system engineers.

What do you think of BYOD as part of the solution to opening things up?

Cara

PS Ranting fine :)

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