

Proving the value of digital and information literacy in higher education through Project DELILA

by Blog Admin

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As [Project DELILA](#) prepares to come to a close, [Jane Secker](#) writes about how the project has aided the development of new and innovative teaching methods and has embedded digital and information literacy into teaching qualifications at higher education level



Bringing together librarians, educational developers and learning technologists from a range of institutions, [Project DELILA](#) has proven the potential and value that digital and informational literacy can have for higher education teaching. The Developing Educators Learning and Information Literacies for Accreditation Project (DELILA) is part of a series of projects to release a set of open educational resources (OER) and has focussed on releasing materials relating to digital and information literacy that are suitable for use in teacher accreditation programmes in higher education.

In partnership with the [University of Birmingham](#) and a professional group for librarians, the [Information Literacy Group](#), LSE's [Centre for Learning Technology \(CLT\)](#) and the [Library](#) have been working on the project for the past year, exploring the issues associated with releasing teaching materials as open content, such as copyright and licensing.

Definitions

Information literacy (IL) is defined as: 'knowing when and why you need information, where to find it, and how to evaluate, use and communicate it in an ethical manner.' (CILIP, 2004). Meanwhile UNESCO (2011) have recently launched a [Media and Information Literacy curriculum](#) for Teachers in recognition of its importance in 'building inclusive knowledge societies'. Digital literacy is closely related to both media and information literacy and defined as "the skills, knowledge and understanding that enables critical, creative, discerning and safe practices when engaging with digital technologies in all areas of life" (FutureLab, 2010).

Last year, colleagues in CLT worked with the Teaching and Learning Centre to develop new content for the Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching in Higher Education (PGCert), covering new technologies and addressing a range of digital and information literacy issues. The teaching resources used in these sessions will be released as part of DELILA. In addition materials from workshops run by both CLT and the Library will also be made available, such as 'Keeping up to Date' and newer courses on blogging and using social networking sites such as Twitter.

OERs and Creative Commons

Open educational resources (OER) differ from traditional teaching materials largely due to the licence under which they are released. Rather than being completely protected by copyright, OERs are released under a Creative Commons Licence, which provides recognition and protection for the author of a work, while allowing others to re-use and adapt the content. The term OER was first used by UNESCO and other important projects in this area include the MIT OpenCourseWare initiative that was described in this earlier [blog post](#).

The DELILA project allows LSE to gain recognition for the development of innovative teaching resources, but others are able to make use of them freely. In most instances other teachers will need to adapt the materials to their local requirements. In converting the materials to open educational resources, the DELILA

team also needed to amend the materials, for example removing any third party content or institution specific information. This process was a useful exercise as it meant in each case the materials were reviewed and updated. In many cases images were either removed, or a new image was found through carrying out a search for Creative Commons licensed content.

Project Outputs

LSE's resources will be made available via a new repository developed by the Library, using the same software used for LSE Research Online. Staff at the University of Birmingham worked with LSE Library to customise the repository software to make it more suitable to present teaching materials. All the materials will also be deposited in the UK teaching and learning repository, [Jorum](#).

Conclusions

The project will finish in August and has been an opportunity to explore the issues associated with releasing teaching materials as open content, such as copyright and licensing. Issues such as currency and sustainability have also been important; teaching materials particularly related to new technologies, are updated frequently, so the repository will need to be maintained. This project also developed a standard way of labelling the content to help those searching repositories for teaching materials.

The project team have presented at several conferences and published two articles and the forthcoming dissemination workshop is fully booked. DELILA highlights how the Higher Education Academy have recognised the value of embedding digital and information literacy into teaching qualifications for those at higher education level. By sharing LSE and Birmingham's resources with the community, the project team hope to encourage good practice in the field. It may also lead to a wider recognition of the need to develop the digital and information literacy skills of both staff and students across higher education.

For more information about the DELILA project visit the [Project Blog](#) or contact the Project Manager, Dr Jane Secker (j.secker@lse.ac.uk)

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