



**STUDENT AMBASSADORS  
FOR DIGITAL LITERACY  
(SADL):  
EVALUATION & IMPACT  
REPORT**

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## Executive Summary

This study evaluates a pilot project, Student Ambassadors for Digital Literacy (SADL), at LSE led by Learning Technology and Innovation and the Library. SADL was set up to better understand the digital and information literacies that LSE undergraduate students have and how the School can best support them as part of a wider teaching and learning strategy. The project was launched following a review of undergraduate support in 2012 which found digital literacies equip students with important attitudes, skills and behaviours that enhance their studies, are relevant to the workplace and to their daily lives (Bell et al, 2012.) SADL aims to understand how these skills could be embedded into the curriculum. This report considers the impact of the project on the students, academic staff and academic support staff who have been involved in it. It also captures evidence about how to best to facilitate the development of digital literacies at LSE through collaboration between academic and academic support departments, undergraduate students and the Students' Union.

SADL was launched as a project to explore how best to develop students' digital and information literacy skills with a small cohort of 20 students in year 2013/14 and 40 students, in 2014/15 with a view to improving provision for all LSE undergraduates. The report finds that digital literacy skills are highly valued by these students for their academic studies, their personal lives and in the workplace. As students said during the interviews:

*"I am glad I joined SADL because I wouldn't have known anything about copyright or any qualitative skills if I didn't. So in terms of study skills that really helped me a lot like research and managing information and things. It helped me through my second year."*

*"I think it has greatly changed the way I study. I think I have much more structure in my essay writing process"*

SADL has been an opportunity to develop digital literacy resources that provides support for undergraduates in several new areas. The project also reveals more can be gained by working with students as partners to provide appropriate and effective information and digital literacy support. Peer support can also provide a valuable way for students to learn from each other, but also for staff and students to learn together and may be a more sustainable and scalable way of providing digital literacy support. This approach is also likely to reach more students than the current programme of optional workshops does for while we recognise the value of the programme, the resource implications of offering the workshops to every undergraduate at LSE would be impractical and unsustainable.

The report presents conclusions and recommendations for sustaining the project, to ensure that it has a wider impact across the school. It also highlights the impact that this project has had in the HE sector. In summary:

- SADL should be open to undergraduate students across all disciplines from 2015/16 to develop the skills of a greater number of students and to continue to understand their current research practices. To ensure SADL remains viable, places on the programme would be limited in number and students will be selected to be part of the programme through an application process.

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- Greater guidance will be given to Student Ambassadors about peer mentoring and students who complete the programme will be offered an opportunity to be formally employed as Senior Ambassadors to run workshops and provide on-going support for their peers.
- The SADL team will explore with LSE100 where there might be opportunities to include elements of workshops in the core undergraduate programme and how Student Ambassadors might be able to act as mentors for LSE100 for other courses within departments.
- The project will develop academic staff knowledge of digital literacy through staff development events where they will have an opportunity to meet SADL students and review their current teaching practice.
- SADL will develop a communications plan for 2015/16 and appoint a Communications Officer in the team, who will liaise with all stakeholders to keep them informed about the project and the impact it is having within LSE and more widely in the HE sector.
- Evaluation will continue in 2015/16 to gather ongoing feedback on the needs of LSE undergraduates and the benefits of this programme for graduates as they enter the workplace.

## 1. Introduction

Student Ambassadors for Digital Literacy (SADL) started as a year long pilot project in 2013 funded by the Higher Education Academy (HEA) with 20 undergraduate students from the Departments of Statistics and Social Policy. Evaluation was carried out for the pilot project and findings were published (Secker and Karnad, 2014) (Secker et al., 2014). In 2014 the project was extended to run a second year and expanded to include the Departments of International Relations and Law in addition to Statistics and Social Policy. While the first year's pilot had been successful, it was thought that including more academic departments and more students would provide greater insights on its scalability and sustainability. Consequently, 36 undergraduate students were recruited as Student Ambassadors and 4 undergraduate students participated for the second year as Senior Student Ambassadors, who worked with staff as part of the project team. In 2014/15 SADL was funded by the Learning Technology and Innovation (LTI) and the LSE Library with a budget of £3000. Project partners were LTI, LSE Library, Teaching and Learning Centre (TLC) and the LSE Students' Union (LSESU).

This report was carried out to evaluate the success of the project, its impact on the students and staff who were involved with a view to making recommendations for the future. The evaluation drew on Kirkpatrick's four-level Learning Evaluation Model (Kirkpatrick, 1979) to explore reaction, learning, behaviour and results of SADL. The Jisc Student Partnership Toolkit (<http://www.hei-flyers.org/wordpress/staff-zone/resources/>) was also used to inform this study.

In evaluating the impact of SADL, the team considered the following as measures of success:

- Improved staff knowledge of student digital and information literacy practices
- Evidence of increased knowledge/confidence of students in digital and information literacy practices
- Student satisfaction levels with the programme
- Engagement with key stakeholders - academic staff, Students' Union; senior managers.

## 2. Background to SADL

Jisc defines digital literacy as 'the capabilities which fit someone for living, learning, and working in a digital society' (Jisc, 2014) and the term overlaps considerably with information literacy, which is knowing how to find, evaluate, use and manage information. The value of digital literacies for graduates has been recognised by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) (2015) who are using it as part of their institutional reviews in 2015-16. This report uses the term 'digital and information literacy' to indicate the overlap in these capabilities.

Research reveals that the idea of young people as 'digital natives' who are comfortable and proficient in using technology, is largely a myth (Jones and Czerniewicz, 2010), but also leads to unhelpful assumptions about their digital and information literacy skills. SADL was launched as a project to explore how best to develop their digital and information literacy skills with a view to improving provision for all LSE undergraduates. The project team were keen to understand disciplinary differences between students at LSE, and sought to understand how better to embed digital and information literacies in the curriculum. SADL was also an opportunity to establish partnerships with students and to explore the role of peer support as a scalable and sustainable way of supporting students in this area. SADL has also been highlighted by Jisc as an exemplar of effective

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practice supporting students' digital experiences through engaging students in dialogue and empowering them to make changes (<http://digitalstudent.jiscinvolve.org/wp/exemplars/>).

The Student's Union and academic departments were central to recruiting students to join the project. Undergraduate students completed an application and were selected by the project team. SADL centred around four workshops conducted by staff from the LSE Library and LTI. These highly participative workshops ran in Michaelmas and Lent Terms:

1. Introduction to the SADL project and finding information;
2. Academic practices: Reading and Research;
3. Managing and Sharing Information;
4. Managing your digital identity and the digital future.

Following the workshops, Student Ambassadors were encouraged to share what they had learnt on digital literacy with the wider student population using the project blog, Moodle and various social media channels. All Ambassadors received £10 Amazon vouchers for each workshop attended and participation in additional activities. Following the evaluation report from 2013/14 (Karnad & Secker, 2014) the project team introduced additional elements in 2014/15:

- The project team employed 4 Senior Student Ambassadors, who had completed the programme in 2013/14 and who provided advice and guidance to the current cohort.
- Students undertook a small research project in groups presented at a celebration event, to explore questions such as how to improve learning spaces or Moodle at LSE. Each group was led by a Senior Ambassador.
- A greater attempt was made to clarify the Student Ambassador role.

### 3. Objectives of this study

The end of the second year of SADL is a prime opportunity to conduct an impact study of SADL capturing feedback from the major stakeholders, including student ambassadors, senior student ambassadors, academic staff, and the project team. The data provides insights and directions for positioning SADL in the future. This study explores the impact of SADL on the students and staff, drawing on Kirkpatrick's four-level Learning Evaluation Model (Kirkpatrick, 1979) to explore reaction, learning, behaviour and results. It also captures evidence about how to best to facilitate the development of digital literacies at LSE through collaboration between academic and academic support departments, the undergraduate student population and the Students' Union. This part of the study drew on the Jisc Student Partnership Toolkit (<http://www.hei-flyers.org/wordpress/staff-zone/resources/>).

In evaluating the impact of SADL, the team considered the following as measures of success:

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## 4. Methodologies

The evaluation and impact study used a combination of data collection methods, including a survey and interviews with stakeholders to explore the impact at LSE. External impact has been identified via usage data from the project website and from the dissemination activities, e.g. conferences and publications of the SADL team. These are presented in the Appendices.

### 4.1. Survey and Interviews

At the outset of the project, students completed a research practices questionnaire that had also been used in 2013/14. At the end of the project, students were sent an evaluation and research practices questionnaire. At this point students were also invited to participate in an individual structured interview.

In the survey, students were asked about their experiences of the following areas:

- Recruitment
- Workshops
- Experience of being involved in SADL
- Research practices after joining SADL.

In the interview, students were asked about their experiences of the following areas:

- Recruitment
- Communication with the SADL team, fellow ambassadors and students who are not in the SADL programme
- Workshops
- Support
- Impact of SADL.

Staff interviews were also conducted with the LSE Students' Union (LSESU) Education Officer, academic staff and members of the project team. They were asked about the following areas:

- Understanding of SADL
- Impact of SADL on students
- Impact of SADL on LSE teaching methods and environment
- Impact of SADL on themselves.

The student evaluation survey and the student interview questions are presented in Appendix 3. Full transcripts of the interview are available in the LTI archives. All surveys and interviews were conducted on a voluntary basis.

### 4.2. Research practices data

Part of the pre- and post-project survey evaluated the impact of the students' research practices before and after joining the project. The questions were based on a study of undergraduates by Purdy (2013).

### 4.3 Other data sources

The project has maintained a website (<http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/lseadl>) since its inception hosted on a WordPress site. Detailed statistics can be generated from this site to indicate the number of visitors

to the site and the levels of engagement. SADL generated considerable interest from others in the higher education sector and a list of conference presentations and publications is included in Appendix 2 to demonstrate the impact of the project externally.

## 5. Responses

### 5.1 Survey

Thirty students completed the pre-SADL survey and 20 post-SADL surveys were collected from the student ambassadors participating in SADL 2014/15. The response rate was 83% and 56% respectively<sup>1</sup>.

### 5.2 Interview

Interviews were conducted with 4 senior student ambassadors, 6 student ambassadors, the LSESU Education Officer, 2 academic staff and 3 members of staff from the LSE Library and Learning Technology and Innovation from the project team. The data has been anonymised.

## 6. Findings

### 6.1 Impact of SADL on students

#### 6.1.1 Motivation, recruitment and incentives

When asked what motivated them to join the SADL project, all survey respondents identified the opportunity to gain information and digital literacy skills as the primary motivation. 50% of the respondents also identified a positive reference on their Personal Development Aide Memoir (PDAM)<sup>2</sup> and the opportunity to network with other students and LSE staff as reasons for joining SADL.

In the interviews, student ambassadors cited that they joined as they recognised the importance of digital literacy and wanted to learn skills that facilitate their study and research-

*“Digital literacy is something that is useful for everyone in any point of their lives” (SA1)*

*“It was a good thing to learn more about digital literacy” (SA4)*

*“It said I would be taught how to do research” (SA4)*

*“I thought coming to the group can help me learn effectively” (SA2)*

Interviewees also revealed that the idea of being an ‘ambassador’ was potentially a rewarding experience-

*“I think it’s a cool thing that it’s an ambassador [programme]. You can learn things and you can teach other students with some fantastic tools” (SA3)*

*“It mentioned that it was going to be an ambassador programme.” (SA4)*

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<sup>1</sup> 20/36 \*100% = 55.6%

<sup>2</sup> PDAM is the name LSE use for the Higher Education Achievement Report: <http://www.hear.ac.uk/>



### 6.1.2 Motivations for Senior Student Ambassadors

All four senior student ambassadors expressed in interview that they wanted to remain involved in SADL in its second year because of their positive experience as student ambassadors in the previous year. They wanted to seek ways to further contribute to the project-

*“The first year was very good. I learnt so much and the staff was so friendly. Just being able to help more with the project was the reason why I wanted to keep on working with the SADL project.” (SSA1)*

*“I thought it was a good idea so I thought I would support the project going forward and... I would help in ways that I could, and it seemed to be becoming a senior ambassador.”(SSA2)*

*“When I was a student ambassador, I really enjoyed what I learn, and I felt that I could contribute more” (SSA3)*

*“I started off as a normal student ambassador in its pilot year... I thought it seemed interesting. If I can provide any support in any way possible I think it’s an enriching process in itself.” (SSA4)*

#### Recruitment

In the interviews, student ambassadors said that they heard about SADL mainly through their department, including promotions during lectures (SA6) and emails from their course administrators (SA3) (SA2). Some students also saw the promotion of the SADL project on LSE Moodle page. (SA4)

#### Incentives to join the SADL project

When asked what could further incentivise students to join the SADL project, interviewees suggested that more information could be provided on the role of the ambassadors-

*“Maybe SADL can be more specific about the role of the student ambassadors. At the beginning I didn’t really quite understand the role of an ambassador. But I actually learnt something” (SA4)*

This view is echoed by senior student ambassadors in interview-

*“More clarity on what it is in the first place, and let the students know that it its not just for students who want to be able to utilise the reading list” (SSA2)*

Another view shared by the student ambassadors and senior student ambassadors is to link up SADL project with increasing students’ employability, as two students mentioned:

*“If the promotion is more about career it might help” (SA6)*

*“[LSE students] are very career driven. If we advertise it more like it’s good to put on CV, like employers are looking for this kind of think.... It’s a great experience...I think that would be useful” (SSA2)*

The project team were aware that LSE students are career focused and that there are many opportunities already to enhance employability, so while it would act as an incentive, SADL aims to develop students digital and information literacies beyond the workplace, so this needs careful thought.

#### **Other suggestions on incentivising students to join the SADL project**

*“I think the thing is to give a sense of reward to them. If their effort can be beneficial to all the other students, but I think now the problem is that students don't feel a lot about what we have done for the school for other students.”(SA3)*

*“I think doing more advertising would be a big part. I am sure people saw it on their emails or on Moodle but it might not have been that much information. Or it might not have been as eye catching or interesting as first glance. So maybe adding colour or making it more eye-catching so it seems more interesting to join.” (SA1)*

#### **Incentives to be senior student ambassadors**

When asked what could further incentivise student ambassadors to join again as senior student ambassadors, all four senior student ambassadors suggested in the interviews that the SADL project could highlight the senior ambassador programme and its benefits at the early stage of the SADL project, or even during recruitment-

*“It's just telling them how much of a change they could bring. Or the opportunities that they would get, making sure that they know that if they join again, their participation will be taken into consideration, they thoughts and they would actually help improve LSE.” (SSA1)*

*“Some of the students had really good ideas where they were really keen to stay on for the next year. But again, they were not really sure what role that would entail.” (SSA2)*

*“I think people are expecting what the senior ambassadors are doing to be a student ambassador role, because it's like spreading knowledge and things. So if they know that after they learnt the knowledge they can spread it in their second or third year, then will probably be more motivated across the four workshops and want to be a senior ambassador.” (SSA3)*

*“We weren't sure at the very beginning, and when we gradually realised what we were supposed to do. But when you wanted to sign up for it that's not something you know. So I think just increase the information transmission and stuff. And I think more positive responses possibly.”(SSA4)*

Two senior student ambassadors also pointed out in interview that self-motivation is key for student ambassadors to join again as senior student ambassadors-

*"I am not really sure how you would convince them to stay on other than reassuring them of what it is that they have already sort of wanted to do. I think if someone doesn't want to stay on... I can't think of anything that would all of a sudden change their mind." (SSA2)*

*"I think it's a motivation kind of thing. Depends what you feel about the things you have learnt in your first year, and then seeing what the senior ambassadors do, and if you want to do the same things, then you can join as a senior ambassador." (SSA3)*

#### **Other suggestions on incentivising students to be senior students ambassadors**

*"I think it is important to keep the interest from the previous year, and build up a bigger and bigger cohort." (SSA2)*

#### **Monetary Incentives**

The interviews revealed that students have split views on using monetary incentives for recruiting student ambassadors and senior student ambassadors-

*"I thought the Amazon vouchers are really good." (SA6)*

*"The good part about not having [monetary] incentives is that obviously it's cheaper. And the people who would join would be [out of] interest. They are joining not because they want to get the money. It's because they are really interested. And I think it's easier to keep them with non-monetary incentives after they have joined. Or maybe we want to introduce monetary incentives at the later stage so that people are not drawn to it because of that." (SSA3)*

*"I think monetary incentive is pretty important. I am just being honest. I think especially given the engagement that current batch [of senior student ambassadors] had with those things." (SSA4)*

#### **6.1.3 Communication channels**

SADL established various platforms to facilitate communication between staff and student ambassadors, and the wider world. The team utilized different modes of communication, including face-to-face, email, a Moodle page, the SADL blog or website (<http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/lseadl>), official SADL twitter account (@LSE\_SADL), and the official SADL Facebook group (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/760391937307254/>), which was set up as an open group.

#### **Communication with the SADL team**

Student ambassadors who attended the interview referred to emails as the main way to communicate with the SADL team-

*"I think the only real way that I communicated with the SADL team was through email. That's how I got most of the information... [the SADL team] emailed me a few times and that was quite good." (SA1)*

*“For me I think I mostly communicated through emails. And there wasn’t much communication. It was just a reach out email for the SADL coming workshops through emails.” (SA2)*

Most senior student ambassadors preferred face-to-face communication. In the interviews, they explained that they had more opportunities to communicate with the SADL team, such as debriefings and planning sessions for coming workshops.

*“The most productive meetings or communications is when we are face to face. We would have the four senior ambassadors who would come to this room and we would meet up with Jane and Geraldine and all and just talk about the workshops I think. It’s much better environment for promoting creativity just anyone can speak their mind.” (SSA2)*

*“To me I prefer face to face the most because you get a lot more from sitting together and discussing what happened, especially the debriefs. I feel that the debriefs and the pre-workshop planning are the best times to actually to tell them our ideas because we come fresh from the workshops that just ended, so we have opinions on how they work, what are the good parts about the workshop, what are the bad parts and how it can improve.” (SSA3)*

### **Communication between fellow student ambassadors**

Both student ambassadors and senior student ambassadors have mixed views on the Facebook group as a channel to communicate with the SADL team and fellow student ambassadors-

*“I think Facebook group would be a perfect choice because I use Facebook quite often.” (SA4)*

*“Facebook was really convenient even though when the senior student ambassador contacted us no one really replied. And I thought that peer pressure kind of made everyone silent and unresponsive, which is really bad. Because no one replied, so when no one’s replying, you don’t feel like you should reply. But in the end I tried to speak out.” (SA6)*

### **Improvements to communication between the SADL team and student ambassadors**

Respondents of the survey suggested that there could be more interaction between the SADL team and the students-

- *“More interaction with the staff and students from other groups”*
- *“More interactions between SADL and non-SADL students - face to face interactions”*

Student ambassadors also gave suggestions on how to improve communication with the SADL team and fellow student ambassadors-

*“Because for me I didn’t really know who was in my group and it was really confusing. Even though there was a Facebook page, you can’t really see people’s faces in their profile pictures. It would be better if we could all meet in the same session. So if you can divide people according to the sessions they chose, then we could meet with our senior ambassadors.” (SA6)*

*“I think possibly improving the email service or maybe making it more than just ‘this is what the workshop is, and this is the summary of what’s going to be there’, maybe to encourage people to come, or you can say, ‘this is what’s going to happen, but this is what we are hoping to achieve from this. This is what we are hoping you will leave with’ so people have more incentive to come.” (SA1)*

### **Communication with students who are not part of SADL**

In the interviews, student ambassadors shared the view of having difficulty in communicating with the wider LSE student population, and mentioned they had problems using the blog-

*“I thought the blog was quite confusing... I can’t remember if I actually ever gained access. But I thought the blog was less convenient to use because we don’t usually use the blog anyway... Yeah I have talked to some people. We were like ‘oh yeah we should probably log in’ but we just kind of forgot.” (SA6)*

*“I don’t think many of them would even know about the SADL blog” (SA1)*

### **Improvements to communication with students who are not part of SADL**

Two senior student ambassadors found LSE Facebook pages or LSE SU Facebook accounts a good way to communicate with fellow students who are not part of SADL-

*“I think as for now we haven’t done it yet, but a Facebook page would be the best way. Because at the start students will like all the LSE pages. So by liking that they have automatically subscribe to the things that we will be informing them about.” (SSA3)*

*“Facebook is probably one of the most useful way if we can get the Student Union. If we can get the General Secretary or someone to wholeheartedly support SADL, and actually get involved, and then tweet about it and put it on Facebook and get people to actually read it, it would go on. You would have the fresher’s pages things like that...” (SSA2)*

A student ambassador also suggested face-to-face communication in the interview-

*“I think maybe we can have a booth at Houghton Street and talk to people, so that people at least know that we exist. I think we can have iPads. Because we*

*had iPads for the last session, we would put iPads in. We could be like 'oh you can try out this app, or that app'." (SA6)*

#### **6.1.4 Workshops**

As in 2013/14 workshops were the main way of engaging SADL students and a chance for them to exchange ideas and learn from staff and each other. Four workshops were conducted throughout the year

- *Workshop 1: Introduction to the SADL project and finding information;*
- *Workshop 2: Academic practices: Reading and research;*
- *Workshop 3: Managing and sharing information;*
- *Workshop 4: Managing your digital identity and the digital future.*

Survey respondents found Workshop 3 most useful, followed by Workshop 4, Workshop 2 and Workshop 1. Feedback was captured for each session in the survey which is presented below as quotes from students.

#### **Workshop 1: Introduction to the SADL project and finding information**

This session attempted to do two things in one, it was a chance for students to get to know each other and find out about SADL, it was also focused on helping students find information and reflect on their search strategies. The feedback was mixed in terms of some finding it very helpful and others saying it was too basic:

*"First workshop was useful in guiding us to finding specific useful information from the pool of resources that can be found in internet. It was light session and I was able to relax."*

*"Prior to the workshop I had little exposure to using the Library catalogue or Google Scholar. Very insightful and have since gone on to use both resources."*

*"Spending a lot of time playing around Googling each other... some information was quite basic."*

*"Too much stuff I knew already"*

#### **Workshop 2: Academic practices: Reading and research**

Workshop 2 focused on helping students evaluate the information they found, manage their reading lists and consider how to approach assignments better. Again the feedback was mixed, but several quantitative students found this session less relevant to their course:

*"The introduction to Google Scholar and other sources, as well as the speed reading practice helped me gain new skills in my academic studies."*

*"Strategic reading to get through hoards of reading. Liked that you showed us how to do citations properly and clarified the grey areas on plagiarism"*

*"As a statistician, this knowledge may be a little redundant as I don't have too much reading."*

*"May not have been as applicable to those studying quantitative courses? Though it was for me."*

#### **Workshop 3: Managing and sharing information**

Workshop 3 was a very popular workshop based on the feedback collected in the survey and the interviews. This session focused on how to manage and share information and students shared apps that they used in their study and in their social lives.

*“Outstanding. Loved that you showed us lots of apps like Trello and Evernote. Personally I have made use of google drive, but each to their own I guess. Liked that you not only exhibited these apps but that the workshop was more of a forum in which we told you what we already used.”*

*“I found the opportunity to try out different apps and discuss our feedback very useful because it means I did not have to try them out one by one on my own which would've allowed me to procrastinate.”*

*“Talking about different apps and learning on how I can use them in my day-to-day life. “*

*“Spending a lot of time brainstorming. Would also have been nice to go around and ask random LSE students what app they have recently discovered?”*

#### **Workshop 4: Managing your digital identity and the digital future**

Finally Workshop 4 which focused on digital identity and the concepts of a digital footprint, but was also a chance to try out using video and audio equipment to prepare students for their group projects, was popular with students, although one student did comment they had covered this at school.

*“Useful. Understand the importance of digital identity, how detrimental it can be if not managed correctly.”*

*“very thought provoking, especially on whether 'self-censorship' is a form of repression of a freedom of expression”*

*“Very useful, I found some unwanted information about myself”*

*“Not sure about others, but I learned a lot about my 'digital literacy' in school, so a lot was repetitive. It would have been more useful to learn how to control your digital presence completely, if you want.”*

#### **Additional feedback on workshops from interviews**

In the interviews, student ambassadors found research tools such as Google Scholar very useful. They also felt their ability to utilize library resources increased -

*“Looking for information first in the library search, because that's where you can get information for academic purpose. Before that it was just Google, Google, Google. How it's more library when it comes to finding paper and stuff.”(SA2)*

*“Using Google Scholar, understanding how to use the library search engine, understanding how to use the library. That was very helpful... Also... I learnt a lot about writing a good bibliography.” (SA1)*

Some found Workshop 4 on digital identity useful and important as it was relevant to job searching.



*"I guess of all things, the digital footprint [workshop] was quite interesting. I mean how it never goes away, whatever you have been doing throughout your life... It can be used in a very productive way." (SA2)*

Many student ambassadors also shared the view in the interviews that workshops are a good way for them to learn from each other. They found them a rewarding experience-

*"It was great having brainstorm sessions. That's where I really learnt the most because everyone had different routines and used their phones in completely different ways almost. And that's where I think I really expanded my horizons." (SA1)*

*"I think the deepest impression I had for the workshops was... where we tried out the apps and we exchanged information about different apps. I thought that was a really useful way... When we met together and exchanged information I found more alternatives and more solutions for my problems." (SA6)*

### **Value of workshops for quantitative students**

Half of the SADL students in 2014/15 were from the Statistics Department so it was important to gather their feedback on whether the workshops were of benefit to them. Student opinion was divided on the matter with some survey responses suggesting the content of workshops, such as strategic writing and research tools, was not relevant to them. However, interviewees offered alternative views. A student ambassador who was studying a quantitative degree saw the workshop as a good opportunity for understanding other disciplines-

*"It was quite unique that you learnt... how other students studied. For example, I study statistics, we don't have any readings and essays. Since for ourselves in the future will do research, it is essential to learn the skills in research and [doing] readings." (SA3)*

A senior student ambassador also expressed that SADL workshops could be useful for students doing quantitative degrees as they would have to do qualitative modules in year 2 or 3-

*"In my third year I think I am doing like a half quantitative half qualitative module. So I feel more confident, being able to extract the skills from SADL to work on that... There are modules that are qualitative as well. It just depends [on] which ones you choose. So it's not completely irrelevant. So when first-year ambassadors come and tell us that 'oh I don't need to know this because doing Statistics', they don't know that in their second and third year they actually need it." (SSA3)*

### **Suggestions on workshops**

Respondents of the survey suggested additional topics to be added to the workshop, such as using digital skills in the workplace and how student ambassadors can share what they have learnt with their peers.



### 6.1.5 Final group project

In the survey, students were asked their thoughts on the group project led by the senior student ambassadors. Most students found the final project a good opportunity to get to know their fellow ambassadors. However, as reflected in the interviews, it was hard to get everyone to participate in the project, and students felt the project teams could have been given more guidance.

Some feedback from the survey is presented below:

*“The group project was a useful way to be able to work with other ambassadors, the role of senior ambassador was particularly very helpful, as she shared her experience and expertise in preparing and presenting the project.”*

*“Enjoyed getting hands on and going out to speak to the people. This is where I felt most like an ambassador “*

*“It wasn't that useful because Moodle is one of the least problematic things in LSE and everyone already has a consensus on it that it only has some minor issues. I learned how to think of good interview questions and how to persuade people to accept our interviews.”<sup>3</sup>*

This final quote from the survey is particularly revealing:

- *“It was useful, though it was very rushed and slightly disorganised. Many people were confused as to what was going on/when to meet, etc. It would have been better to have worked towards the project from the very first workshop. Also, it would have been more interesting to know whether our presentations/ideas could really have an impact and enact changes. Will these presentations actually have lasting ideas? Though in general it was nice to get to know people in SADL more. It really was the only chance to make proper friendships during the program...”*

When asked about their experience of working with the senior ambassadors on the group project, students reported it was a chance to try out different skills, such as video editing, communication and statistical analysis-

*“I learnt how to analyse the data because we have collected some data from the students' opinion. When I made the video I cut them and organize into one.”*  
(SA4)

*“...I remember the very interesting way of them teaching us how to get videos and how to record things. That's technical stuff. They give many interesting examples and they show us how to do interviews.”* (SA3)

The student ambassadors also said in the interviews that the senior student ambassadors played a big role in the group project

*“My senior ambassador was really good. She was always at the meetings that we had there, where we would talk about the project. And she had a very big*

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<sup>3</sup>One of the topics of the group project is the LSE Moodle page

*role but she also let us do a lot of other things. She was there to answer questions. And also it was a bit difficult at the beginning to get the ball rolling and to actually get us start working, but she motivated me.” (SA1)*

*“The team leader<sup>4</sup> helped us a lot... She showed us different ways to prepare the presentation, edit the video and everything. She was also the main point of contact throughout the preparation of the project.”(SA2)*

In the interviews, senior student ambassadors shared the view that it was difficult to get students together, and that they took on a big role in the project-

*“I didn't actually get to meet them. I only met one of my students during the workshop. It just so happened that all the workshops that I attended, they were in different workshops, so I never really got to meet them.”(SSA2)*

*“I think I have seen everyone because we were only assigned as the senior ambassador in the third workshop I believe. So I think I remember their faces from the first two workshops but at that point of time we were not assigned to any teams yet. That's why I know who they are, just that I haven't seen them after I was assigned. Because less people came to the workshops towards the end. So you don't get to see a lot of people”(SSA3)*

*“I was happy with my group, but again it was very difficult to motivate some people. I think there's only so much you can do and I think a lot of it is self-motivation... Because we would be literally sitting for hours for the surgeries and there would be like one person coming for the last five minutes. At that point a lot of my project had to be done by me because I think the people were not on the same page. Out of the 10 I think 3 showed up.” (SSA4)*

*“But then at the same time it was not their project. I felt like it was more like my project. I was telling them what to do, how to do it. I think it would be nice to actually tell them 'it's yours, you decide what you want to do'. But that was really hard because the big group was not able to meet together.” (SSA1)*

### 6.1.6 Peer learning

In the survey, students were asked about their experience in sharing their knowledge as a student ambassador. Only one respondent said that he/she did not share the knowledge in any way. Many of them shared their experiences through daily conversations with their peers for example with their roommates, their friends at LSE and beyond. Most said they did this in a very informal way, usually through face to face conversations.

The interviews further confirm that face to face conversation was the main channel for peer-learning:

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<sup>4</sup> senior student ambassador

*"I am in hall this year and we have meals together every day... Because I think although it is a digital literacy programme, being able to fully talk about [it] seems to make me less intense. Instead of having to talk about 'oh look at all these different modes of technology that you can use, all these cool apps that you can use, I feel that it is much more personal if you could just talk to them about it in person.."(SA1)*

*"And I...talk to my friends back home in my country... like using the apps and Google Drive and everything. Yeah I was just communicating how to use these different tools... I think they found it helpful." (SA2)*

### **Suggestions on ways to facilitate peer-learning**

The survey respondents offered suggestions on how SADL can better facilitate peer-learning:

*"I think some sort of collaboration with class rep for the department could be one way to come up with a platform for students to put forward their digital concerns, to begin with."*

*"Maybe digital training that is geared towards statistics. So for instance, as well as Trello, introducing people to Wolfram Alpha, which is highly applicable to our field."*

*"To have more interactions with students. If we could get name badges or T-shirts so that people would know to come talk to us about digital literacy."*

*"If there is a clearer framework for the duties of the Ambassador and platforms to address the student body at large apart from the blog, the Ambassador should be able to make more of an impact. It might also be useful if the programme itself gains more publicity and acknowledgement so the student body knows that it exists and they can come to us to discuss issues relating to digital literacy."*

In the interviews students felt more resources and support should be given by the SADL team to facilitate peer learning:

*"Maybe some teaching events, holding a small classroom with students. But I think that for most students, if he or she is from an Arts background, like if they are learning politics or history, that student would not lack the skills of doing research. Maybe holding some small classes would be beneficial, and maybe let students from that history background or politics background to teach how they learn. That learning skills can be an advantage." (SA3)*

*"To have free sessions where everyone can come down and talk have a chat. Or to have more sessions maybe in different LSE learning areas, learning spaces. The library or the computer lab in the East Building, or in the student centre, maybe different areas with people that have shirts or signs for people to know that the student ambassadors are there. I think its just about targeting areas where people would have questions." (SA1)*

*"I think the fact that we are not really clear on what an ambassador should do in the down time, where we don't have any workshop or anything to attend, is*

*quite problematic. So maybe we can have an ambassador training session. So like talk about how we can reach out to people.” (SA6)*

### **6.1.6 a) Impact on students’ way of learning or studying**

SADL had an impact on the way that students learnt or studied in several ways. Many students found that the strategies, tools and apps discussed and explored increased their confidence in knowing how to find good quality information and less reliant on just using Google. Students also believed that they knew more about to manage information and were more organised and structured in their approach to study after the workshops. As one student said:

*“In one of my lectures, Comparative Politics, many people take notes from their laptop. As the lecturer speaks, they type out. I don’t do that. I just take the notes. So if you are using tools that you have learnt here [in SADL], and taking notes, that would help you personally.” (SA2)*

Another student specifically mentioned that they felt they were using Moodle more effectively following SADL:

*“I started using Moodle in a more effective way. I knew better how to search for different courses. How to make sure that I am up to date with what’s going on, on the pages when information from my lecturers was being put online.” (SSA1)*

Another said:

*“I think I can be more effective after learning different ways. I think it makes me more aware of what I am doing with my notes and stuff. I tried to follow what I learnt in the sessions to improve my efficiency.” (SA6)*

Students commented that some of the tools they have been introduced to they now used in the personal lives for example, using Trello to plan a holiday, as this student explained:

*“And then there’s the whole social media, organization, personal side that I learnt. Like Trello for making trips or cool travel apps to organize an itinerary for you on your next trip, or just tracking what you are eating or tracking your exercise, or tracking your sleep- I remember that from one of the workshops. Just understanding all the different things that you can do with your phone.” (SA1)*

There was a clear benefit to students for both their study and personal lives, as one student said:

*“For the group project, we used an APP called Trello, we applied that to the group project. I like that app very much. For my personal life I just learnt how to use LinkedIn and the library research engine. I think all of them are quite useful.” (SA3)*

Overall students mentioned that they used more library resources or found resources through Google Scholar for their studies.

*“Before joining SADL, I know nothing about Google Scholar. I only just used Google. And I didn’t know how to use the LSE library website. After joining SADL I have acquired knowledge in how to use it.” (SA4)*

Their comments suggest that SADL students were more independent in their approach to their learning and less reliant on their tutors or reading lists as this Senior Ambassador says:

*"I am glad I joined SADL because I wouldn't have known anything about copyright or any qualitative skills if I didn't. So in terms of study skills that really helped me a lot like research and managing information and things. It helped me through my second year." (SSA3)*

Finally, after being involved in SADL students reflected on their online behaviour and were more aware of their digital footprint. This workshop and workshop 3 on managing and sharing information were very popular with students:

*"I have already mentioned digital footprint, that was one of my favourite workshops. I saw its relevance, I saw its need. Not just for myself but also for other people- the need to filter information." (SSA4)*

#### **6.1.6 b) Impact on students' choice of career**

SADL appears to have had less of an impact on students' choice of career, which may be because some of the students on the programme already had specific ideas of what they wished to do. For example a number of the Statistics students were taking the Actuarial Sciences degree, and the Law students were planning to practice law. One student did decide to change careers following becoming involved in the SADL programme – this was a Senior Ambassadors who told us:

*"I think SADL has really changed my perception of career. Because I have always been quite a tech-savvy person. So in my second year I have decided to apply for more digital related roles and I decided to completely forgo other roles that are more quantitative-based, like banking and things." (SSA3)*

Another student commented that they were still unsure what career they wanted to go into, but that digital literacy would be useful regardless, saying:

*"I am a first year student, so career is in the back of my mind. I think [SADL] is something that I would definitely want possible employers to know about. But in terms of choice of career, I don't know if I can really answer that because it's still a little bit fuzzy in my mind...but I think no matter what career you would go into, digital literacy is something that would be very valuable." (SA1).*

Another made a similar point:

*"A lot of firms today are moving towards a lot more digital focused. Digital literacy is a lot more important these days. All the firms are showing interest in that." (SAA2)*

Another student was aware that learning to code might be helpful in their future career saying:

*"I would like to consider whether I will learn some computer skills in the future like excel or C++. Maybe I will take that into consideration. Maybe that can be one of my futures, because I am studying statistics so it is quite useful to learn these computer skills." (SA3)*

### **6.1.6 c) Impact on students' competitiveness in the job market**

Despite SADL having less of an impact on students' choice of career almost all the students commented on how the programme impacted positively on their competitiveness in the job market. Several students had already used their SADL experience on their CV, for example when applying for internships or full time work. Several students said that the experiences were valuable when they had been for job interviews and employers had been interested in the skills they had gained from SADL. One Senior Ambassador said:

*"I don't know about the direct effect on employability before you join [the company]. But to me I definitely think it's very good. I think I did talk about my SADL experience. When people read through my CV and they are like 'oh can you tell me more about this programme.'"*  
(SSA3)

One student ambassador commented:

*"Part of it is maybe you are being employed by people that are older than you, they would be very impressed you have knowledge of digital literacy because they don't. But I think it's something that is very highly regarded- to have computer skills is always a big bonus."*(SA1)

Another Senior Ambassador said:

*"As a senior ambassador, you are guiding students to do a project. So I mean, those kind of things are always well-regarded by employers and I think it really does help. Students like students on the SADL programme, will see the benefit in the job market."*(SSA2)

The student continued:

*I definitely think I am more employable because of SADL.... When you think about SADL, considering all the workshops and all the teamwork. A lot of it is interacting with other students and communicating with other students. It's not just in your course, but students from these different courses. (SSA2)*

What is interesting is the value that student ambassadors and employers placed on the teamwork and communication skills that they developed on SADL at least as much as the digital literacy skills that they learnt in the workshops as expressed by one student ambassador:

*"I think SADL offers something which is concrete as well as non-academic. I think it is a fact that a lot of people find it difficult to put some university achievement or engagement to give the holistic outlook. I think SADL works well in that sense."* (SSA4)

Senior ambassadors also valued the employment and mentoring aspect of SADL in particular. Finally the students felt SADL had helped them to smarten up their online identity and use LinkedIn so some aspects of it were directly relevant to job searching.

### **6.1.6 d) Impact on students' feelings or behaviour about LSE's teaching methods, learning methods, and learning environment**

There were some unexpected findings related to how SADL changed students' perceptions of LSE's approach to teaching and learning, the use of learning technologies and their relationship with the

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School. Some student ambassadors contrasted their experiences in SADL with the teaching they experienced in their departments, saying they valued peer learning and the supportive nature of the SADL workshops. As this student said:

*"I thought SADL was a good outlet for relaxing but still learning about stuff that would help us in our studies at the same time." (SA6)*

Another said:

*"I prefer SADL. It is more easy-going, the atmosphere. It is totally different from [going to] a lecture." (SA4)*

Students also valued being asked for their opinion on matters related to their teaching and learning. Several SADL students who attended a meeting with the Director of IMT, Nick Deyes in December 2014 commented on this, for example:

*"That was actually really interesting because we were talking to a lot of members of IMT. We were talking to them, discussing the future of learning at the LSE and the library, just sort of what can be changed for the better, including moodle and stuff like that. I thought it was actually really cool to see that the school sort of care, that they were actually looking to see the students' input or looking to hear what the student input was." (SSA2)*

Another commented on how this improved their understanding on decision making at LSE:

*"...one of the ways that I contributed was through the meeting with Nick. I wanted to help with the learning spaces, like redesigning it, ... And I know how things work, like the IMT and the TLC and what they actually do. So when emails come I will be like okay I know why this is happening." (SSA3)*

This Senior Ambassador also felt that SADL gave students a voice, saying:

*"...we are not just here to utilise the space and go to lectures. We are actually also here to help them improve, and help see if there are any other possible room for improvements." (SSA3)*

Students also became aware that their opinion counted at LSE and that improvements might be possible. There was also a sense that SADL changed some students' attitudes towards LSE staff and made them realise staff wanted to listen and help them and work with them. As this student said:

*"It made me think a lot about it [teaching] and realise that there's a lot of improvement that can be done. Because we know so much and we have to share it with our lecturers and make sure that they make the most of it. For example, there's is this lecturer, XX, ... he was given the prize of the lecture that was most viewed or something. He's just so involved in improving his teaching and using digital tools and everything. I think we need more people like him." (SSA1)*

Finally there were some students who felt SADL helped them to understand why some learning technologies were being used such as Personal Response Systems, and the limitation of tools like PowerPoint that many lecturers rely on exclusively as expressed here:



*"I have learnt more about the learning methods, just because now I see the role of the clickers in lectures. I see how the teachers are limited to powerpoints, so they only think to use powerpoints. Or none at all, which is not very nice. In terms of the learning environment, I feel like after learning about the tools that LSE has, and all the tools that there are in general in the world, I feel like LSE could really boost themselves and almost expand their horizons and use more tools that are available." (SA1)*

The students who worked on the project about improving learning spaces at LSE also were struck that improvements could be made, for example one student said:

*"I think with learning spaces, I remember we suggested this thing that you would give a whole document of the learning spaces around the campus of LSE. Because I know that there are these small booths in the Student Union building. I know a lot of people complain about the library, like 'oh voice travels up through the space'. I think that way SADL can take that up." (SSA4)*

Finally, some students felt their lecturers were not engaged enough in the SADL project and they were disappointed more did not attend the end of SADL celebration, as they felt they would have learnt from the students. This student reported:

*"My lectures are really unorganized sometimes. On the day of our presentations not a lot of professors came. So I think the reach was not as far as we would hope it to be. I talked about it on the day as well. Like my Moodle, for some of the subjects, it's really messy. It is really hard to navigate. I feel like if professors could come to our presentations, it would help." (SA6)*

#### **6.1.6 e) Impact on students' own digital literacy**

Unsurprisingly the area where SADL had the greatest impact was on students' perceptions of their own digital literacy skills. Students throughout the interviews mentioned this, but this section pulls out some of the main points they made, from learning about specific tools (such as Trello) to helping develop strategies to evaluate the information they find and be more organised. Interestingly, because SADL was a self-selecting programme, the SADL staff assumed that the students who joined the programme would have greater skills than the general student population as a whole. However, all the students we interviewed said they learnt new skills as part of SADL. Interestingly some students deliberately became part of SADL to improve their skills in this area, and were aware they were not as 'digital literate' as they should be. One said:

*"It would be impossible for my experience or my actual literacy not to improve because I was so bad before. I remember in one of the workshop in like last year, even just going about Google Scholar and filters, who knew? So that's probably that's one of the reasons why I stayed on because it was such a help to me. I was totally oblivious, living in my own little world, not really understanding not even digital literacy but just the importance of being digitally literate." (SSA2)*

Some of the main areas where student skills improved were:



- Awareness of and knowledge of how to manage their digital footprint / online identity and the use of tools such as LinkedIn to build a professional profile
- Awareness and application of specific tools to help them organise information or time (e.g. Evernote, Trello, Wunderlist, Google Drive)
- A greater understanding of how to 'problem solve' and keep up to date, which made them more independent learners
- Learning from peers and SADL staff about 'academic practices' such as finding quality resources and apps to help manage resources
- A greater understanding of library search tools and Google Scholar.

This student was asked how her digital literacy had improved and she told us:

*"It has greatly improved. I mean first of all when I was at LSE I knew little, I knew about LSE for YOU and the reading list website that was it. But now, I have got bookmarks on my computer, lots of different news websites where they talk about different apps. Websites like the LSE library search engine, Google Scholar, Notes, I have learnt a lot. And also about different apps on my phone, I feel much more aware of everything that the app store and the LSE websites has to offer." (SA1)*

In summary, SADL raised students' awareness of the value of digital literacy, but also made many of them reflect on how they needed to improve their skills in their area, in particular to help them when they graduated, but also to help them in their everyday lives. As this Senior Ambassador said:

*"Before I didn't know much, I didn't even know what digital literacy was. Now I guess it changed in the way that I think before when I had something to do, I knew the traditional way of doing it ... But now I think more and I try to find new ways to solve problems or I just try to keep up to date. I realise there's just so much that I don't know. You just have to keep up to date with different software that have been created." (SSA1)*

## **6.2 Feedback from the Students' Union Education Officer**

An interview was conducted with Tom Maksymiw, the LSE Students' Union Education Officer and this provided valuable additional data to complement the data collected from students. Throughout the year, Tom was involved in publicising SADL, in particular at the start of the academic year when the Student Ambassadors were recruited. He also attended the majority of the workshops and provided input into team meetings on occasions. His feedback is organised under similar headings to the data collected from students. During the 2 year SADL project, the input of the SU Education Officer has proved invaluable and in 2013/14 Rosie Coleman, the SU Education Officer played an active role in the project and presented at several workshops.

### **6.2.1 Recruitment and motivation for students**

The SU Education Officer felt that SADL promotion in 2014/15 was not clear enough for students and that he was not familiar with the aims of the project. He felt that the skills development and career opportunity aspects of the project could be promoted to students more. Tom's view was that SADL is an "opportunity to learn useful stuff, work as a team and get good skills for your CV." He felt that these extra skills (including communication skills) were especially appealing for quantitative students as they had a limited opportunity to gain them in their mainstream curriculum. Tom was aware that it shouldn't just be aimed at people that want to put in on their CV but he felt that skills are "a real

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draw" for LSE students and should be promoted to students with specific examples of the types of tools and techniques to manage technologies that would be covered in the workshops.

In Tom's view the recruitment process for senior ambassadors seemed to work well as he observed that they were engaged and genuinely passionate and eager to share their knowledge. He believes that the role might only need to be publicised more if the project was lacking in volunteers. He suggested that the opportunity to build on previous work and take the projects forward may be a selling point for students. He also suggested promoting the opportunity of being a Senior Ambassador earlier and focusing on the fact that the skills learnt as a senior are different to those learnt as a student ambassador.

### 6.2.2 Communication

Tom drew on his experience of communicating with LSE students and believes that many students don't listen to central communications from the SU but would listen to messages from societies. He suggested that communication could be done via the departments as students may be more inclined to listen to information coming from their department. In order to engage academic staff members he suggested SADL could hold a show and tell event for departments to get them involved from the outset. With respect to social media Tom did not think Facebook is a great indicator of student engagement. He said that it was *"very easy for people to like an event but harder to get them to actually turn up"*. He believed that many students would be more comfortable writing a Facebook post rather than a blog post but may be encouraged if the post was going onto an academic department's web page. Tom was sceptical of the value of Twitter for engaging students and also less sure if Moodle would be a good communication channel.

Tom was supportive of the idea of peer support and thought that the peer-led nature of SADL workshops worked well. He suggested tying SADL activities into LSE100 assessment or topics to make it relevant to all students. He also suggested more links to employability skills could be made in the programme, such as including Excel training, and skills for interviews.

### 6.2.3 Workshops

Tom gave positive feedback on the content of workshops and said they were *"useful, interesting and exciting."* He commented that the digital footprint content in Workshop 4 was engaging and relevant to all students. He believed that students changed their behaviour as a result of the workshops, for example using Google Scholar in place of Google. He said that he thought that *"...Content was engaging... Wish I'd known about it while I was studying"*. Tom did not note anything in particular that needed changing however he believed that the workshops could cover more practical skills such as how to use Google docs efficiently. He thought that the format of the workshops was good (better than simply a PowerPoint presentation) and that group work helped students to bond. He felt that student ambassadors presenting to other students outside of SADL would be an excellent idea, for example at Staff Student Liaison Committee (SSLC) or Undergraduate Consultative Forum (UGCF) meetings. This would be a better way of engaging students not part of SADL with the content, rather than relying on the project blog.

### 6.2.4 Projects

Tom praised the group project topics and felt they tackled issues that students talk about and the SU campaigned on. He felt the content could have more connection to what was going on in the school and there needs to be more action or impact as a result. It was his view that the LSE senior

management needs to feedback about what they are doing and hear and be involved in the student projects, so that students are partners in school projects.

He felt that the experience of carrying out a research project may help with student dissertations and that being involved in the projects is beneficial to students. He thought it showed dedication, innovation and makes students more employable, especially for the senior ambassadors as it demonstrates project management and peer support skills.

#### **6.2.5 Impact on students and on teaching and learning**

Tom believed that SADL had a significant impact on students' digital literacy skills. He said that there is *"no doubt that SADL affects students' digital literacy"* as it gets students to think about how to best use technology. Not only are students digital literacy skills improved once they are involved in SADL but Tom believed it impacts more widely on their teaching and learning. He thought students became more aware of their teachers' limited use of technology. Tom's belief was that digital literacy skills are not covered in LSE's undergraduate curriculum and students are relying on their teachers or other students if they don't have innovative teaching which is promoted by TLC and LTI. He felt that there was a lot of reliance of students finding these things for themselves, saying: *"the onus is on the student to go out of their way to develop these skills"*.

He argued that students are often exposed to a variety of technologies at LSE, for example the reading list system, but are not necessarily literate in using them. He stated: *"I don't think my own digital literacy improved while a student at LSE, the key is building it into the curriculum in some way"*.

#### **6.2.6 Role of Students' Union in engaging students**

Tom believed that the Students' Union could help to promote SADL but pointed out that the SU have problems with reaching all students and that it is often difficult to communicate to students especially at the start of term when there is overloaded with information. He planned to inform the next SU Education officer about the project and suggested that the SADL team liaise directly with the SU Education Officer rather than the SU communications team. Tom highlighted some related initiative organised by the SU, for example employability workshops that might have some overlap with SADL. Last year one of the workshops was run by Charlie Beckett from Media and Communications about how to market yourself.

Tom recommended that a blog post from a SADL student could go on the SU Blog for example on 'top 5 technologies I never knew existed at LSE'. The student union pay students to write blog posts and they mostly blog about what they want. He said the SU get many of the best ideas this way, but they are sometimes direct students to write about a specific subject. The students are given training from the SU communications team and this year they found that the student Instagram take over was very popular and worked really well.

In conclusion, the SU has found that developing a sense of ownership can help with projects as students are more likely to engage. Tom recommended promoting that point that the group project was a suggestion from a senior ambassador, to show how students are shaping SADL.

### 6.3 Feedback and suggestions from academic staff

The project team view academic staff as key stakeholders in SADL however it has been difficult to know how best to involve this group in the project, given how busy academic staff are during term time. Staff have helped to recruit students to join SADL, and several updates were sent to key members of staff in departments during the academic year. They were also invited to the SADL Celebration where students presented their group projects, although very few attended. It is clear from the findings that the SADL team need to ensure academic staff understand the aims of SADL and are able to have some input into programme, to better embed digital literacy in the curriculum. While only two members of academic staff were interviewed by SADL staff, these findings are valuable to inform the project in the future. They also represent quantitative and qualitative subjects at LSE. The interview questions are available in Appendix 2.

#### 6.3.1 Involvement, motivation and relevance of SADL

The interviews revealed that neither of the two academics had been actively involved in the SADL project. They also did not have a clear idea of the project aims, however both staff agreed to open the programme to undergraduates in their department, and helped to recruit students. When asked what motivated them to be involved with SADL, both academics saw it as an extracurricular activity of benefit to students but not essential to their degree.

When asked specifically on the relevance of digital literacy to their discipline, some comments were in contrast to those from students. The academic in the quantitative discipline did not explicitly recognise the value of digital literacy to teaching and learning, saying that *"usually lecture notes and assigned reading lists are sufficient for undergraduate students"* and that student do not usually need to use digital resources. Meanwhile, the qualitative academic said *"We know students use digital sources along with the reading lists, and we are keen to guide them to use them as productively as possible."* Both staff believed it was important not to overload students with initiatives and to provide them with relevant information that will save them time. However, when prompted, one of the academics commented that they would like students to *"distinguish between sources"* and to *"not use dodgy sources"*. It was also felt that digital literacy skills may be useful for students who were completing dissertations or research projects. The staff concluded this type of learning should be embedded within courses if possible and that teachers should give clearer guidance to students on using digital sources.

Staff were asked specifically about the impact of the SADL project on students. One of the academics confessed they did not know but that they would like to find out. Both academics suggested SADL would help with student employability. Overall, it was clear that the project team needed to do more to communicate the aims of SADL, what digital literacy is and how its role in student learning.

#### 6.3.2 Alternative ways for students to learn about digital literacy

When asked how else students could develop digital literacy skills if they were not part of the SADL programme, both academics mentioned that students probably already possessed these skills and would otherwise pick them up naturally somewhere else. These comments align with the literature that suggests academics often over-estimate students' information, digital and academic literacies (McGuinness, 2006) and that these skills can be 'learnt by osmosis'. (Weetman, 2005) Interestingly, both academics did not think developing digital literacy skills to be a main priority for students attending LSE.

### **6.3.3 Ways to incorporate SADL into the curriculum**

The interviews discussed ways to embed digital literacy into the curriculum, and there were suggestions for both student and staff development. One of the academics suggested taster sessions could be included for students as part of the dissertation modules. Another academic suggested that staff might benefit from training, which they could then cascade down to students by implementing it in their teaching. It was suggested that it would be useful to be given specific examples of the kind of problems that students are experiencing. Experiences from SADL could then be used to show how to solve these problems. The interviews suggested staff development may be key, so that teachers can improve their communication to students on issues such as how to use the reading list system. The timesaving aspect of digital literacy skills was thought to be important and should be emphasised for staff and students.

Despite the small number of interviews we conducted the feedback gathered was highly valuable but suggested more work needs to be done to communicate the purpose and impact of the SADL project to academic departments.

### **6.4 Experiences of the SADL project staff**

SADL involved staff from LTI, the Library and TLC and feedback with three members of staff who taught on the programme was gathered to capture their experiences. SADL had involved new ways of teaching, working with students more in a collaborative approach and brought together staff from two departments to teach new types of content, so it was important to assess the value of this approach.

#### **6.4.1 Benefits for staff**

LTI and Library staff found SADL a highly positive experience, which gave them an opportunity to meet and engage with students, develop their teaching skills and gain an understanding of the needs of undergraduates. The staff enjoyed working with students as partners and found the senior ambassadors contributions invaluable. As one member of staff said:

*“I greatly benefited from being involved in SADL firstly because I could gain some teaching experience, particularly experience of working in small groups with undergraduates. I got to see what type of activities worked well, how to structure a class and what reaction students had to the sessions.”*

Other feedback included:

*“[SADL offered a] space and time to experiment in workshops with more interactive activities that have real learning benefits.”*

*“[SADL allowed] learning from the student ambassadors about their research practices and how they study.”*

The feedback on working with students in a more collaborative way, (students as partners) was particularly enlightening:

*“I found it very interesting to explore the students as partners approach to teaching and I think the senior ambassadors were amazing. We were lucky to find such engaged and enthusiastic individuals their feedback and support was very beneficial to the project.”*

*“2014-15 has been brilliant to have 4 Senior Ambassadors to work with – their input has been invaluable and enabled us to move the work forward. Their ideas and enthusiasm have benefitted the project. The opportunity to work alongside students is not always available to us in the Library but SADL has shown what an asset such an approach could be to us in many ways.”*

#### **6.4.2 Benefits for students**

Staff could see many benefits for the students involved with SADL. They believed that the workshops developed students’ digital and information literacy skills, which were relevant to their studies and beyond.

*“The 4 workshops I think have the most tangible benefit – clear skills/literacies that students can take away. [It is] clear that students are keen to understand more about digital literacies and the relevance to their work and studies.”*

The feedback from students also confirmed the staff belief that there was a need for digital literacy skills and challenged assumptions that students are ‘digital natives’ comfortable with the digital world and proficient in new technologies. As this member of staff said:

*“It confirmed that each individual is different, some students use technology very well for academic work and knew about apps I had not come across whereas some had tried very little or no technology.”*

Other benefits that staff perceived for students were the opportunity to network with peers from other departments at LSE, as well as engaging with staff in a different way to what was offered in their courses. Staff believe that SADL helped with employability and gave students opportunities to develop their presentation skills and writing skills.

*“[SADL offered students] opportunities to participate in cross department & institutional activities – presentations, conferences, blog post writing”*

Overall there was a sense that SADL was unique and *“fills a gap that many students don't cover in their UG courses.”*

#### **6.4.3 Other comments**

Staff made a few interesting observations, again challenging the idea that all students are ‘tech savvy’ as one said:

*“I was surprised at how reluctant all the students seemed to be regarding the use of social media for the course. They didn't seem to find the blog intuitive and were reluctant to write content. Although they obviously use Facebook in their personal lives, they did not use the [SADL] Facebook group, Twitter or even seemed aware that they existed.”*

Finally the benefits of working with the Students’ Union were emphasised by one member of staff, who are thought to be a key way of engaging with students.



#### 6.4.4 Staff recommendations

Finally SADL staff offered a number of helpful suggestions based on their experiences of teaching on the programme. They believed that the ambassador role needs clarification. They also emphasised the importance of building a relationship with the students, providing clear structures and opportunities for peer support. All staff agreed that departmental support is important in enabling students to reach out to their peers. As one member of staff said:

*“If we could tie in the departments to the project more and get them to be involved in the dissemination of information that would help with the ambassador role and make it clearer to students, it would also reach more students.”*

Another made a similar point:

*“Ambassadorial role development – this seems to be the area that is less clear to students in terms of what they should be doing or could be doing. A greater buy-in from academic departments would enable them to perhaps be given space or opportunity to share with their peers through different channels.”*

It was suggested the SADL team had a dedicated communications officer, which would help ensure consistent and regular messages were sent out to all stakeholders. Also more could be made of using a peer learning network as a way of scaling up the project. One member of staff was concerned that in doubling the number of ambassadors from 2013/14 (from 20 to 36 students), it made it difficult to manage. They said:

*“Having 40 students this year was great but I found it more difficult to get to know students. As we were running 3 workshops each time, staff would not meet all the students regularly. Would need to look at how we can build and maintain the student/staff relationship quickly and meaningfully for the project and for the benefit of both.”*

In summary staff involved in SADL can see clear benefits for themselves and for students. They recommended providing more support to students to carry out the ambassador role and believe that stronger Students' Union and department involvement could help with this. Scaling the project is also clearly a key issue for the project in the future.

#### 6.5 Research practices questionnaire

The SADL students were asked six questions on their research practices before and after they joined the project to ascertain if their skills and practices changed as a result of taking part. Unfortunately far fewer students completed the post-SADL survey, so it is difficult to draw any conclusive findings about changes in practice as a result of the intervention. However, what emerges are some interesting findings about students' research practices. These questions are based on a US study by Purdy (2012) and were used in 2013/14 as part of the SADL evaluation.

##### 6.5.1 Beginning research

The students were asked where they typically start their research for a scholarly project. Both pre- and post-SADL experience, students exclusively cited the following sources for the start of their research:

- Google

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- Library catalogue and Databases
- Reading Lists
- Wikipedia
- Google Scholar.

Tutor2u.net and examsolutions.com were also mentioned by one student but not as a starting point. The Library database just topped Google as the first starting point for students before they joined SADL and surprisingly Google just overtook the library database for the post-SADL students. Google Scholar got a total of four mentions from both surveys and one of the post-SADL responses said they would search Google Scholar last of all, having searched Google, Wikipedia, reading lists and the Library first. The sources of initial research don't appear to vary much after the SADL experience and this was the same for the previous cohort of SADL students (Karnad and Secker, 2013). Google and the Library database are often cited as a first step to gain an initial understanding or overview on a topic before following up with more specific and authenticated information.

One comment a student made prior to SADL was:

*"I begin by going to the LSE reading lists for the specific course and I look at the additional readings. I then go on the library database to get more information on the book. If there isn't much on the library database I use Google to find more information about the book before going to the library to check it out."*

Meanwhile, following SADL another student explained:

*"I usually begin with Google so I can get a basic/general understanding. I'll read a bit of a wikipedia page to understand the general arguments posed and the context of the issue."*

### **6.5.2 Importance of resources**

Students were asked to rate the importance of specific resources for their coursework. Interestingly, there are some variations in the rankings although with so few responses we can't make any real conclusions. Prior to the SADL project the students ranked books as the most important resource, followed by public search engines. After SADL this changed and public search engines were ranked the most important with scholarly search engines and the Library search engine both moving up to joint second place, with books down to 4th place. There are changes at the bottom end of the scale as well, with public records moving down from 6th to 9th place after SADL and online book stores moving down from 8th to the bottom of the rankings. Curiously, online message boards moved from the bottom of the rankings up to 8th place after SADL.

### **6.5.3. Enjoyment of research**

The students were asked how much they enjoyed doing research on a scale of 1-10 (1 being dislike very much and 10 being enjoy very much). There were only 6 responses to this question after the SADL project so we can't really compare the two surveys conclusively. Of the 24 students who were surveyed before SADL the levels of enjoyment from research was quite spread. Four students rated their enjoyment of research at a low 3/10 and 4/10 and four students rated their enjoyment at the upper end of the scale 9/10 and 10/10. Eight students selected the average enjoyment area of 5/10 and 6/10 and eight rated their enjoyment as quite high at 7/10 and 8/10. Unsurprisingly, it's a fairly mixed range. After SADL, of the six students that responded, only one student rated their enjoyment



as 10/10 and the remaining four students selected from a range of 5/10 to 8/10 to rate their enjoyment levels.

#### **6.5.4 Strengths and weaknesses as a researcher**

Some common themes emerge from the SADL students listing their strengths and weaknesses. Theme 1 was the most prevalent trend amongst both the pre-SADL students and post-SADL students surveyed. It is hard to pick out huge changes in outlook between the pre-SADL students and post-SADL students. The pre-SADL students were quite insightful about their strengths and weaknesses, listing: “open to new ideas”, “ability to consolidate and analyse arguments”, “patience and ability to think critically” as their strengths and weaknesses as “a lack of literary flair in my writing”. The post-SADL students listed: “getting down my argument”, “inquisitiveness, connecting ideas” as their strengths and not “referencing as I go along” and “not open to contradiction” as their weaknesses.

#### **Theme 1: Strength in gathering lots of research from diverse sources but weakness in not knowing when to stop, lack of structure, overwhelmed by information.**

Pre-SADL students:

*“Strengths would be spending a long time researching because I am so engaged, and connecting diverse sources to synthesise an argument. Weaknesses would be not following a proper structure and reading too much to the point that producing any written work then seems overwhelming.”*

*“Strength: I’m able to get to a variety of sources quickly; weakness: I’m not very structured when it comes to research”*

*“My greatest strength is that I’m open to looking at different types of resources, my greatest weakness is that I get distracted easily so I sometimes end up going on a tangent in my research.”*

*“I always want to find more which is both my strength and weakness, since I get a lot of information about a certain topic but at the expense of my time.”*

Post-SADL students:

*“I take good notes and I am able to quickly skim and see what the general idea is. Weakness - I can easily get overwhelmed by the amount of reading available which can lead me to trying to read TOO much in not enough depth.”*

*“... lack of organization, tendency to keep on researching + not lay out my results + begin using the information (I would just research forever)”*

*“being carried away by information”*

*“My greatest strengths are that I try to look for multiple sources and I take detailed notes of my results. My greatest weaknesses are that I often take down too much information and I get distracted easily.”*

#### **Theme 2: Structured and organised research but limited sources of research.**

*"I am focused hard working, i manage my time well, i consistently question my methods thesis and structure in reference to the question. W -> i could use a more diverse range of sources, my articulation of ideas is not always the best..."*

*"My greatest strengths are having a systematic and linear approach to doing my research. My weaknesses would be in knowing how to appropriately divulge from the topic of research to find information that might be useful but not necessarily under the umbrella scope of my research."*

*"Greatest strength is that once I start researching I am committed to finding all the information I need, greatest weakness is that I know of only a limited number of resources to use when researching."*

### **Theme 3: Finding the motivation for topics not interested in or don't know well.**

*"Naturally I am a quantitative student and so I do not find research and writing essays as compelling as doing a math problem set"*

*"I would consider both sides of an event and try to collect as much data as possible. But I would like to do the research with the topic which I am interested in."*

*"Strengths - enthusiasm, conscientiousness, time-management; Weaknesses - boredom if the subject isn't particularly appealing"*

### **Theme 4: Gathering lots of information from a diverse range of resources but not critical enough, lacks analysis**

Pre-SADL:

*"My greatest strength is that I try to get information from a variety of sources, and thus get a wide range of different perspectives on one issue. My greatest weakness would be not being critical enough of sources and investigating where they came from and understand the background of the author."*

Post-SADL:

*"Very conscientious in looking for sources, but may lack analysis of the sources."*

#### **6.5.5 Evaluating library sources**

Students were asked how they evaluate sources they find on the Library Catalogue and the Library database. Again with only 14 responses from the pre SADL students and 8 from the post SADL students it's not possible to make any real conclusions. Most of the students, both pre and post SADL, didn't really answer the question of how they evaluate sources from the library.

Many of the pre SADL students mentioned basing their research choices on their reading lists, titles and author searches, not really considering the idea of deviating from their set reading or evaluating other sources. Some also limited their search to online library sources only, due to practical issues such as not being able to get books out of the library: *"I have often searched for books in the library which are said to be available but are actually not on the shelves"*. Even one post SADL student said

they often limit their choices in this way: *“In terms of library search, I will use a source (often times) if it is available online, as it is much easier than trekking to the library and then find that it isn't a good book to use.”* However, that same student talks about how *“On google scholar it is useful to see how many people have cited an article”* demonstrating some post-SADL skills.

There were however, some evidence of evaluation skills. The pre-SADL students wrote: *“I choose a wide range of different thinkers, but I aim to look for articles that have been highly contested or controversial”* and *“Usually considering who the author is and whether the source reputable or not.”* The post SADL students mentioned *“looking at how many times it's been cited”* and *“I look at how new the sources are and whether they are reliable.”*

#### **6.5.6 Evaluating internet sources**

The SADL students were asked how they evaluated sources that they find on the internet. Both pre- and post-SADL students seemed more aware of the need to check the legitimacy of internet sources, this is a common theme for all students but due to the response numbers there is a wealth of these kinds of comments from the pre-SADL students:

*“How reputable is the source i.e. is it from an academic source, it is a media outlet, is there bias, what assumptions are they making?”*

*“Suitability (i.e. if it's a blog then I wouldn't attach a lot of significance but will still see what it has to say on the subject); reliability (would prefer academic articles and respected peer-review journals); how long ago the article/journal/source was written and whether it's still relevant in the current climate”*

Some of the SADL students also had specific sources that they turned to, thinking them to be more reliable, such as .edu and .gov sites, scholarly databases, university/faculty websites, reputable and academic journals and peer reviewed journals.

A few of the pre-SADL students revealed that they had less scrupulous means of evaluating online sources:

*“I tend to use google books preview or amazon books preview to assess the relevance of the source”,*

*“First page of the search engine”, “I will open the websites one by one and read a little then close the irrelevant websites”* and *“The one which has the highest priority ie. the one which is on the top”*. However, a couple of the post SADL students also indicated poor evaluation techniques: *“The ones that are highest up on the search and contain the most number of keywords”* and *“I usually choose for pdfs”*.

#### **6.5.7 Other comments and recommendations**

Overall, students had positive SADL experience. 100% of the survey respondents would recommend their friends to get involved in SADL. Students also thought that there was room for improvement in some areas

#### **Partnership between students and the university**

Both senior student ambassadors and student ambassadors found the idea of students and staff having equal footing in the SADL project plausible. Senior student ambassadors especially appreciated the partnership between students and the university. They had more opportunities to talk to the SADL team and members of LTI. However, they also thought that the SADL team should state students' obligations more clearly at the beginning of the project, making some tasks mandatory for better participation. The tension between establishing a partnership with students and exerting authority for better participation is one area that needs further consideration.

### **Role of student ambassadors**

Both student ambassadors and senior student ambassadors shared the view that the duties of student ambassadors should be highlighted earlier in the project. This, in their view, helps attract students to join the project and increase students' sense of belonging to the project.

They also suggested that more should be done in order to facilitate student ambassadors' ability to spread knowledge and promote peer-learning. Facilitation includes not only soft skills but also logistics support, such as room booking and provision of resources.

### **Senior student ambassadors**

Generally, student ambassadors had positive feedback on having senior student ambassadors as the leaders of their group project. However, both senior student ambassadors and student ambassadors felt that there were not enough opportunities for them to bond and to work together on the group project.

Senior student ambassadors also suggested that their roles should be advertised earlier in the project, or even in the recruitment stage, so that student could have an idea of what the project leads to and how they can play a role in the future.

## **7. Conclusion and recommendations**

SADL aimed to explore how best to support information and digital literacy practices amongst LSE undergraduates, through partnerships with students. The project sought to understand disciplinary differences with a view to better embedding digital and information literacy in the curriculum. It also explored the role of peer support as a way of supporting students in this area. This report concluded there are clear benefits to participating students and staff. The intention was not to reach all undergraduate students with this project and the measures of success used were:

- improved staff knowledge of student practices in digital and information literacy,
- evidence of increased students' confidence and knowledge in digital and information literacy,
- student satisfaction with the programme content and delivery,
- engagement with key stakeholders at LSE and more widely in the HE sector.

In terms of the first three measures, there is strong evidence that SADL is meeting these aims. It was conceived as a way of learning more about students digital and information literacy needs in specific disciplines to make recommendations for how best to support them in the future. It is clear from this report that students value digital literacy skills and there is a wide range of abilities amongst the cohort. However, the notion of students as 'digital natives' is unhelpful and our study found students

benefitted enormously from the workshops, in terms of improved confidence and research practices. The findings show that students have very different practices, partly dependent on their disciplines which suggests that 'a one size fits all model' will not work well for supporting digital literacies.

The strength of SADL has been the level of engagement between LTI and Library staff and students and the collaborative approach to content in the workshops. The use of a peer network to disseminate knowledge and learning in this field also seems to be valuable, but students need structure and guidance. More work needs to be undertaken to engage academic departments with digital and information literacy if the project hopes to fully embed this in the undergraduate curriculum. In summary, SADL has concluded:

### 7.1. For students

- There is a clear need for digital literacy support for undergraduate students that is currently not being met by academic departments or training providers across LSE
- Students value digital literacy skills and participating in a project such as SADL benefits for their personal development as much as for their academic studies
- Students value a collaborative approach to learning with staff acting as 'facilitators' in the area of digital literacy
- Students find working with students outside their discipline useful for reflection, while ensuring their departmental needs are catered for.
- Students can act as peer mentors, but need training, guidance and processes in place to help them do this most effectively and to reach outside their immediate social network
- The wider student body need to benefit from the learning that SADL provides and this could be done by a peer mentor programme, where SADL students can offer training and guidance to other students in digital literacy.

### 7.2 For staff

- Academic staff need a greater level of understanding about digital literacy in the context of their discipline
- A greater level of knowledge and understanding needs to be developed amongst LSE academic staff about the value of digital literacy and the type of support that students might need to avoid making assumptions about the 'digital native'
- Staff benefit enormously from working with students as partners in digital literacy support in terms of developing new approaches to teaching, working with colleagues across teams and sharing knowledge and practices with students
- Digital literacy is an area where academic and academic support staff can collaborate to provide the most effective support for students, both in terms of skills and disciplinary practices.

### 7.3. For LSE

- Employers value digital literacy skills and there is strong evidence that the skills learnt in SADL have a value when students apply for jobs and enter the job market. The Students' Union play a key role in engaging students, so a collaboration between the SU, academic departments and academic support is the most effective way of working with students in this type of project.

#### 7.4. Recommendations

Without significant resources, it is not feasible to scale up SADL in its current form to offer workshops to all undergraduate students. However there are a number of suggestions and recommendations for the future set out below:

- SADL should be offered to undergraduate students across all disciplines from 2015/16 to develop the skills of a greater number of students and to continue to understand their current research practices. To ensure this remains viable, the programme would be limited in number and students will be selected to be part of SADL through an application process
- Greater guidance will be given to Student Ambassadors about peer mentoring and students who complete the programme will be offered an opportunity to be formally employed as Senior Ambassadors to run workshops and provide on-going support for their peers
- The SADL team will explore with LSE100 where there might be opportunities to include elements of workshops in the core undergraduate programme and how Student Ambassadors might be able to act as mentors for LSE100.
- The project will develop academic staff knowledge of digital literacy through staff development events where they will have an opportunity to meet SADL students and review their current teaching practice
- SADL will develop a communications plan for 2015/16 and appoint a Communications Officer in the team, who will liaise with all stakeholders to keep them informed about the project and the impact it is having within LSE and more widely in the HE sector
- Evaluation will continue in 2015/16 to gather ongoing feedback on the needs of LSE undergraduates and the benefits of this programme for graduates as they enter the workplace.

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Weetman, J. (2005). Osmosis—Does It Work for the Development of Information Literacy?. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 31(5), 456-460. Appendix 1: Statistics from SADL Blog

## Appendix 1: Usage Statistics from the SADL Blog / Website

As of 10<sup>th</sup> August 2015 the SADL blog has received a total of 10,145 hits and 17 comments.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2013											11	0	11
2014	255	318	368	402	446	496	394	227	317	1,120	1,094	529	5,966
2015	629	597	723	355	602	502	609	151					4,168

Since the blog was launched in November 2013 there have been 36 posts since this date and there are 12 static pages. The most popular posts and pages are listed below in terms of the overall number of hits.

Title	Views
Home	1,296
Our Ambassadors	1,128
Welcome to the LSE Student Ambassadors for Digital Literacy website!	918
Home page / Archives	815
About the LSE SADL project	653
Resources	550
Badges and recognitions	536
Social Media Is My Life	419
Get involved	394
Workshop Schedule	352
The SADL Team	313

Most visitors to the site (2113) have been referred by a Search Engine (Google being by far the most popular) however Twitter was also responsible for referring 405 people to the site and 79 came from Facebook.



## Appendix 2: SADL Conference presentations & publications

From the outset, SADL attracted considerable attention from outside LSE in the HE sector more widely. A list of conference presentations and papers is presented below as evidence of the impact of this project beyond the institution.

Karnad, A. and Secker, J. (2013) *Student Ambassadors for Digital Literacy*. Poster presented at the Centre for Distance Education RIDE 2013 Conference, 1 November 2013

Bell, M. and Wilkinson E. (2014) *SADL up: putting students in the driving seat for digital literacy*. Paper presented at Librarians Information Literacy Annual Conference. April 2014. Sheffield.

Secker, J. and Bell, M. (2013) Keynote presentation, *Putting Students in the SADL: enhancing digital literacy at LSE* at the Changing the Learning Landscape – Digital Literacy event on 7 May 2013

Wilkinson, E. (2014) *SADL Project* presentation at the London LibTeachMeet, King's College London, 12 June 2014

Secker, J. and Wilkinson, E. (2014) *Ensuring LSE undergraduates gallop to success: emerging findings from the Student Ambassadors in Digital Literacy (SADL) Project*. ARLG Conference, University of Sussex. 24 June 2014

Secker, J and Karnad A. (2014) *Putting Students in the SADL: creating a student network for digital literacy*. HEA Annual Conference, Aston University, 3 July 2014

Secker, J. and Karnad, A. (2014) *Putting Students in the SADL: Creating a Student Network for Digital Literacy*. Academic Practices in Technology Conference, University of Greenwich, 8 July 2014

Bell, M and Secker, J. (2014) *Transitions from school to higher education: understanding the needs of undergraduates at LSE*. European Conference of Information Literacy (ECIL) in Dubrovnik, Croatia, 20 – 23 October 2014

Secker, Jane and Bell, Maria (2014) [Developing digital and information literacies in LSE undergraduate students](#) *ČITALIŠTE* (24). 16-24. ISSN 2217-5563

Secker, J. (2015) *Student Ambassadors for Digital Literacy at LSE*. Conference on The Academic Library's Role in Supporting New Students, University of Limerick, 30th April 2015

Bell, M. and Fry, A. (2015) *Developing digital literacies in undergraduate students: SADL project*. Association of Librarians in the Social Sciences (ALISS) Annual General Meeting, Senate House, London, 14 June 2015

Foley, G. and Secker, J. (2015) *Developing digital literacies in undergraduate students: experience of the SADL project*. Academic Practices in Technology (APT), University of Greenwich, 8 July 2015.

Bell, M and Secker, J (2015) *Sustaining student ambassadors: developing digital literacies in undergraduate students*. European Conference of Information Literacy (ECIL), Tallinn, Estonia 20-23 October 2015.

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## Appendix 3: Interview and questionnaire tools

### 2014-2015 Post SADL Questionnaire

1. Please indicate your level of study
  1. First year
  2. Second year
  3. Final year
  
2. Are you a student in...?
  1. Department of Social Policy
  2. Department of Statistics
  3. Department of Law
  4. Department of International Relations
  
3. What motivated you to get involved with SADL?
  1. A positive reference on your Personal Development Aide Memoir (PDAM)
  2. The chance to earn Amazon vouchers
  3. Ability to network with other students and LSE staff
  4. Opportunity to gain information and digital literacy skills
  5. Chance to represent your department/peers
  6. Others (please elaborate)
  
4. The four SADL workshops are listed below. Please rank them in order of usefulness with 1 being useful, 5 being very useful and 0 being didn't attend. (If you need a reminder of the content of each session please see the SADL resources on the [project blog](#))

#		0	1	2	3	4
1	Workshop 1: Introduction to the SADL project					
2	Workshop 2: Academic practices: reading and research					
3	Workshop 3: Managing and sharing information					
4	Workshop 4: Managing your digital identity and the digital future					

5. Please tell us about any aspects of the workshops that you found useful/less useful. Please note, there is no word limit for your response. Please be as descriptive as possible.
  
6. Would you recommend a friend to get involved in SADL?
  
7. Were there any additional topics you expected to be covered in the programme?
  
8. The next 6 questions are designed to capture further information about your experiences of being involved in SADL. Please include any thoughts about changes that should be made to the role of a student ambassador for digital literacy in the future.
  
9. Please tell us about any ways in which you shared the skills and tools you gained from SADL.

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10. Please tell us your thoughts on the group project led by the Senior Ambassador, if it was useful and what you learned from it.
11. What kind of support would enable you to be successful in your Ambassador role for your department?
12. Please tell us about the areas you felt you made the biggest contribution.
13. Finally please tell us if you think the role is more/less useful at certain times in the academic year and include any other points not covered already.
14. When you are doing research for a scholarly project (i.e. research you are asked to do for your course), where do you begin your searches (e.g. library database, specific website, library search)? What is the first thing you are likely to do? Please be as specific as you can.
15. Rate the relative importance of each of the following resources in your coursework/research (1 being not important, 5 being essential)

		Importance (1-5)
1	Books	
2	Public Search Engines (e.g, Yahoo! Google)	
3	Scholarly search engines (e.g, Google Scholar)	
4	Newspapers or Magazine	
5	Face-to-face discussions/interviews with people	
6	Online message boards or discussion groups	
7	Public records (e.g, government documents)	
8	Library Search	
9	Online journal databases (e.g JSTOR)	
10	Online book stores (e.g, Amazon)	

16. On a scale of 1-10 (1 being dislike very much, and 10 being enjoy very much), how much do you enjoy doing research?
17. What would you say are your greatest strengths and weaknesses as a researcher?
18. When searching through the library search, media articles and print resources, how do you assess which sources you will use?
19. When searching the internet, how do you assess which sources you will use?
20. Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. We will enter you into a draw to receive a £20 Amazon voucher if you enter your email address below:

## Student Interview Questions

### Recruitment and motivation

1. Where did you hear about the SADL project?
2. Why did you join the SADL project?
3. What do you think can further incentivise students to join the SADL project?

### Interaction between

- SADL team and Senior Ambassadors
- SADL team and students
- Senior Ambassadors and students

(Interviewer recaps methods of engagement: Twitter/ Blog/ Facebook/ Email/Face to face/moodle)

1. Which channel do you prefer most and least to communicate with 1. The SADL team and 2. Fellow students? Why?
2. Could you describe your experience of working with the senior student ambassadors on the group project?
3. Could you suggest ways in which the SADL team and future senior ambassadors can improve in communicating with student ambassadors and fellow students (non-ambassadors)?

### Workshops

(Interviewer recaps briefly what the workshops are)

1. What key things did you learn during the workshops? Is there one thing that stands out as being memorable? Use a guide with the four workshop summaries on if needed at this point
2. Were you able to apply what you learnt to your studies?
3. What would you change about the workshops?
4. Was there anything in particular that you think we should remove?
5. Was there anything that you think was missing that we should add?
6. How would you suggest we let other students' (who are not signed up to SADL) know about the content of the workshops?

### Support

1. What do you think being a student ambassador means? What should the role involve?
2. How can student ambassadors provide peer support for fellow students? What problems did you encounter when supporting your peers? What else can we do to make this easier?
3. What additional training/ support do you think you need in order to fulfil the role of a student ambassador?

### Impact

1. In what ways has being part of the SADL project affected or changed (your feelings or behaviour) about.....?
  - The way you learn or study
  - Your choice of career
  - Your competitiveness in the job market
  - LSE's teaching and learning methods (lectures, seminars etc.) and environment (learning spaces)
  - Your own digital literacy

Wrap up – anything else

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Is there anything else you would like to tell me about how SADL has impacted on you in the last year? Or any other feedback you think is relevant?

Questions for the on camera interview

- 1> Why is the student ambassador role important?
- 2> What is the most important thing you have learned from the SADL project?
- 3> Why do you think digital literacy is important for LSE students?

Kirkpatrick model

1 Reaction

2 Learning

3 Behaviour

4 Results