Information and digital literacy:

A strategic framework
for UQ Library 2016-2020
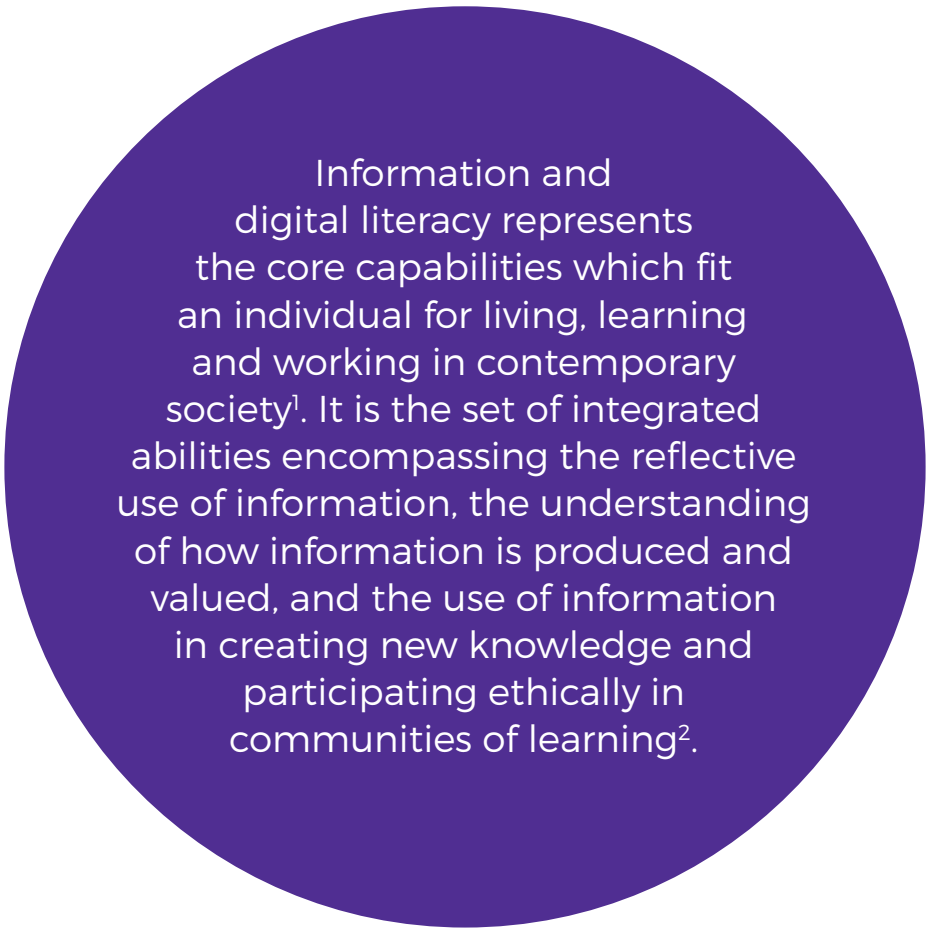
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Information and digital literacy represents the core capabilities which fit an individual for living, learning and working in contemporary society[1]. It is the set of integrated abilities encompassing the reflective use of information, the understanding of how information is produced and valued, and the use of information in creating new knowledge and participating ethically in communities of learning[2].

1. JISC (2014). *Developing digital literacies*. https://www.jisc.ac.uk/full-guide/developing-digital-literacies
2. Association of College and Research Libraries (2015). *Framework for information literacy in higher education*. http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/ilframework

Preamble

The University of Queensland's mission articulates the positive role played by the academic community in pursuing excellence through the creation, preservation, transfer and application of knowledge. Critical to the fulfilment of this mission are the three pillars of learning, discovery and engagement, which are underpinned by UQ's core values including creativity, independent thinking and honesty. Ideas, innovation and integrity are essential ingredients for success in today's complex, competitive world.

The Internet has had a significant impact on the traditional paper-based world: the publishing environment has become far more dynamic and unpredictable. While accessing online information has become an everyday activity for most people, the fluidity of digital resources demands the ability to critically evaluate resources and ideas, to distinguish between credible information and misinformation, and to understand how to use content safely and ethically. Opportunities to create and interact with digital information in increasingly social and participative ways not only influence engagement with personal, social, cultural and professional activities, but also transform many dimensions of academic life: teaching practices, scholarly discourses, investigative methods and research dissemination.

Digital learning technologies are changing the academic landscape. Educational activities delivered through online platforms provide anywhere, anytime access to learning materials in diverse media. The focus is on active, collaborative pedagogies which encourage self-directed learning and the co-construction of knowledge, with the processes of managing, synthesising and re-purposing information being valued as much as the actual student learning outcomes. However, despite the fact that they live in an online, connected world, research reveals that many university students lack the critical and academic literacies to be able to locate, contextualise and interpret the information they require for their learning. Information and digital literacy is therefore recognised as a key component of the higher education settings shared by students, academic staff and academic support staff.

UQ Library is strongly committed to proactively anticipating and responsively meeting the information needs of the academic community. UQL staff provide multiple avenues for information literacy support, including classroom instruction, face-to-face consultations, online resource guides and multi-media tutorials. They help students, teachers and researchers access the Library's extensive collections and teach them how to best use the different resources and bibliographic tools. Changes to the university model, however, impact on service delivery: larger student cohorts mean that traditional face-to-face library instruction is not sustainable for large cohorts and should be augmented by other learning methods.

At the same time, dramatic shifts in information seeking behaviour are presenting new challenges and opportunities; developments in online learning, eResearch, data management and open access publishing are driving the need to think quite differently about information literacy. A clear understanding of how their interactions with digital information influence the ways they think, interpret and communicate ideas can inform UQ graduates' lifelong and lifewide[3] learning practices and enhance their employability in an ever-changing world. Accordingly, UQL has developed a future-focused information and digital literacy strategy to help shape the UQ policies and practices which will support high quality learning experiences and internationally significant research outcomes.

This document presents a strategic framework for information and digital literacy at UQ. The framework will guide the development of a coherent and comprehensive approach to information and digital literacy development, and determine the appropriate infrastructure required to develop consistently high quality, equitable programs and resources. It builds on the strong relationships UQL staff have established with academic staff, while leveraging the opportunities provided by UQ's eLearning environment to offer greater flexibility in delivery and to extend the reach of the learning activities to more students, teaching staff and researchers.

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3. *Lifelong learning* relates to time: learning happens throughout an individual's whole life. *Lifewide learning* refers to space: learning occurs in many different environments and situations. It happens across the diverse areas of an individual's life – at work, with the family, in community organisations, when travelling etc. It therefore encompasses formal, informal and non-formal learning

Vision

All members of the UQ community will develop the information and digital literacy skills they need to thrive and lead throughout their personal, academic, professional and civic lives.

Guiding principles

The *UQL Information and Digital Literacy Strategic Framework* is guided by five core principles:

Collaboration

The responsibility for developing information and digital literacy is not limited to UQL staff. Programs are designed and delivered in collaboration with academic staff, learning designers, education technologists and others, with a shared focus on student learning.

Alignment

In the context of teaching and learning: Information and digital literacy is fully integrated into the curriculum and contextualised in students' learning and assessment activities.

In the context of academic research: Information and digital literacy is fully integrated into the research lifecycle.

Innovation

The development of information and digital literacy skills utilises contemporary pedagogies and online tools in new and transformational ways.

Sustainability

The scope and reach of UQL information and digital literacy activities are extended through the adoption of new, flexible forms of delivery and support.

Evaluation

Information and digital literacies are reviewed and evaluated as part of the process of continual improvement.

Key strategies

The five guiding principles are articulated through a number of key strategies which will inform UQ Library's practice.

Guiding principle

Information and digital literacy is not the sole responsibility of UQL staff. Programs are designed and delivered in collaboration with academic staff, learning designers, education technologists and others, with a shared focus on student learning.

Strategies

To foster and support opportunities for effective collaboration across the university, UQL will:

1. Ensure that the *UQL Information and Digital Strategic Framework* is aligned with the university's strategic directions and academic policies

2. Promote and contribute to a university-wide culture of learning in a digital environment

3. Promote stakeholder acceptance of and engagement with the *UQL Information and Digital Strategic Framework*

4. Actively participate as members of key university and faculty committees

5. Support synergistic interactions between stakeholders, including but not limited to library staff, academic staff, ITaLI, eLearning Services, integrated student support and the Graduate School

6. Provide opportunities for academic staff to develop their understanding of and skills in information and digital literacy

Alignment

Guiding principle

In the context of teaching and learning:

Information and digital literacy is fully integrated into the curriculum and contextualised in students' learning and assessment activities.

In the context of academic research:

Information and digital literacy is fully integrated with the research lifecycle

Strategies

To achieve alignment of the development of information and digital literacy skills with the curriculum, UQL will:

1. Ensure that the concept of information and digital literacy is incorporated into university and faculty learning plans

2. Promote information and digital literacy as part of the graduate profile to prepare students for an unpredictable future

3. Work with key stakeholders to ensure that information and digital literacy outcomes reflect specific discipline and/or professional requirements

4. Seek to have information and digital literacy seamlessly and incrementally integrated into the continuum of student learning within a discipline

5. Participate in and contribute to faculty initiatives relating to curriculum design and curriculum renewal

To achieve alignment of the development of information and digital literacy skills with all stages of the research lifecycle, UQL will:

1. Work with key stakeholders to ensure that information and digital literacy outcomes reflect specific research requirements

2. Support the professional development of researchers, especially research higher degree students and early career researchers

3. Develop and deliver training programs specifically tailored for the information- and data-intensive points of the research lifecycle

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Innovation

Guiding principle

The development of information and digital literacy skills utilises contemporary pedagogies and online tools in new and transformational ways

Strategies

To support innovation in the development of information and digital literacy skills, UQL will:

1. Align information and digital literacy initiatives with other innovative practices in the Library

2. Provide training and support for UQL staff to create high quality learning objects which can be re-used, re-packaged and re-purposed for different learning contexts

3. Design and develop learning resources which:

    a. Are high-quality, modular and flexible, to be integrated into eLearning platforms at the point of need

    b. Cater for diverse learning styles

    c. Foster independent, self-directed learning

    d. Encourage creative, active learning

    e. Provide equitable learning opportunities

    f. Contribute to enhanced learning outcomes

4. Encourage student involvement in the design and creation of information and digital literacy learning activities

5. Draw on the opportunities offered through T&L grants, fellowships and scholarships to encourage scholarly approaches to finding innovative solutions to problematic areas of information and digital literacy practice

6. Introduce a recognition and reward program to celebrate innovative practice

Sustainability

Guiding principle

The scope and reach of UQL information and digital literacy activities are extended through the adoption of new, flexible forms of delivery and support.

Strategies

To ensure that information and digital literacy initiatives are sustainable, UQL will:

1. Ensure that the UQL staff adopt a range of approaches for the delivery of information and digital literacy activities, including online, blended and face-to-face, in order to meet the needs of students and academic staff

2. Develop an advocacy and marketing plan to raise awareness of the role and value of information and digital literacy

3. Contribute to the effective coordination of connected support services available to students both on campus and online

4. Establish and support a community of practice to encourage the university-wide understanding of contemporary information and digital literacies

Evaluation

Guiding principle

Information and digital literacy activities are reviewed and evaluated as part of the process of continual improvement.

Strategies

To foster a culture of evaluation and evidence based practice, UQL will:

1. Develop methodologies to establish a valid and reliable evidence base for high quality information and digital literacy initiatives

2. Introduce evaluation strategies to systematically measure the effectiveness of information and digital literacy activities

3. Encourage and support the use of learning analytics to develop a deeper understanding of the impact of information and digital literacy activities on student learning

4. Encourage and support the use of analytics to better understand the contribution made by information and digital literacy activities to research excellence and research impact

5. Foster an interest in the scholarship of teaching and learning to establish a strong research profile for UQL staff engaged in information and digital literacy activities

Impact indicators

The characteristics of a university which demonstrates systemic and mature practices in information literacy are delineated by Webber & Johnston (2006)[3]. While the criteria encompass institutional factors such as academic management, approaches to teaching and learning, students, academic staff and library staff, consideration should also be given to the characteristics which extend further into the wider university community.

A number of indicators are proposed to measure the quality and impact of information and digital literacy activities coordinated by UQL:

- The concept of information and digital literacies is included in key documents across UQ

- UQL representation on key university, faculty and school committees

- The extent and nature of collaboration with academic staff

- The extent to which information and digital literacy is embedded in academic programs

- The impact of information and digital literacy skills development on the academic quality of student work

- The extent of use of library resources by students

- The achievement of the graduate profile requirements of the professions and employers

- The level of student satisfaction with information and digital literacy skills development activities.

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3. Webber, S. & Johnston, B. (2006). Working towards the information literate university. In: G. Walton & A. Pope, *Information literacy: recognising the need* (pp.42-53). Oxford: Chandos.

Supporting resources

UQL's Information and digital literacy activities will be informed by the following resources:

Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) (2015). *Framework for information literacy for higher education.* http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/framework

Bundy, A. (2004). *Australian and New Zealand information literacy framework: Principles, standards and practice.* 2nd ed. http://www.caul.edu.au/content/upload/files/info-literacy/InfoLiteracyFramework.pdf

Council of Australian University Librarians (CAUL) (2004). *Best practice characteristics for developing information literacy in Australian universities: A guideline*. http://www.caul.edu.au/content/upload/files/info-literacy/InfoLiteracyBestPractice.pdf

JISC (2014). *Developing digital literacies*. https://www.jisc.ac.uk/full-guide/developing-digital-literacies

University of Queensland (2014). *Strategic plan 2014-2017*. http://www.uq.edu.au/about/docs/strategicplan/StrategicPlan2014.pdf

University of Queensland (2016). *Student strategy*. https://www.uq.edu.au/teaching-learning/student-strategy/content/front-page

Dr Gillian Hallam

Information Literacy
Project Manager

The University of
Queensland Library

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