Digital literacy

Authors: Danijela Birt, Jadranka Brkić-Vejmelka, Ines Cvitković Kalanjoš

If one has to list all basic skills that a child needs to acquire before enrolling in first grade, most of us will answer: reading and writing. Even though this can hardly be questioned, it should be pointed out that in today's Digital Age, digital literacy, on the one hand based on literacy, is already taking precedence over these basic literacy skills.

It is important to clarify the concept of digital literacy in all its scope. In general we can say that it implies and incorporates different work skills; from working with software tools for word processing, spreadsheets and photos, e-mail, internet, and web browsers, to applications that create presentations and access to online communication channels, as well as all other practical knowledge that helps us access existing digital content or in creating our own.

In the last ten years we have encountered several concepts that can replace, or rather complement each other, that sometimes appear and are used as synonyms: information literacy, computer literacy, library literacy, media literacy, network literacy, and finally digital literacy (in some texts the term digital information literacy is used). Much has changed since 1990, when the UN Declaration launched a 10-year program aimed at reducing illiteracy and at the same time generated and increased interest on the issue of literacy in the context of the emerging new information society.

During the 1990s the term "digital literacy" has been refered to by a number of authors as an ability to read and understand hypertextual and multimedia texts. In that context, Lanham uses the term as being synonymous to "multimedia literacy". For him, literacy in the digital age, means the ability to understand information however presented, and in that sense digital literacy involves the skill of deciphering images, sounds, etc. as well as text. For Lanham it is crucial that we are aware of the difference between print and digital literacy (Bawden, 2001, S. 246). Digital literacy refers to a way of reading and understanding information that differs from what we do when we sit down to read a book or a newspaper. To put it simply, the difference beetween various types of literacy is inherent to the media itself.

The definition which is used most often is one from 1989, that defines information literacy as the ability of efficently finding, evaluating, transfering, and generally using the information available through a wide range of media, which happens in the ever more complex information environment. The definition is broader than the notions of information and digital literacy, which are contained within it and create a precondition for the successful utilization of services

and tools available via information-communication technologies (ALA, 1989 according to Novkovic Cvetkovic, Stošić & Belousova, 2018, S. 1091)

Paul Glister was the one to popularize the term defining it in a following way; The ability to understand and use information in multiple forms from a wide range of sources when it is presented via computers (Martin 2018, S. 18). According to Glister there are four core competencies of digital literacy, invariant to technology changes: knowledge assembly, internet searching, hypertextual navigation, and content evaluation (Bawden, 2001, S. 248). Glister goes so far as to define digital literacy as an "essential life skill", almost a "survival skill" needed to survive in the Digital Age that we are currently living in (Martin, 2018, S. 18).

An important element of digital literacy is the skill in using the tools available as well as critically questioning these tools as one uses them. This means recognizing and using their power, but also all threats and weaknesses that come with using these tools (Lapat, 2017, S. 50). It is Glister who emphasizes this segment of digital literacy, which implies a critical understanding of the content versus technical competence, and singles it out as a key skill when talking about digital literacy (Martin, 2018, S. 18). For this reason, he considers digital literacy a life skill. Security is an extremely important aspect of accessing and searching for digital content and it is necessary to develop critical thinking in this area in order to successfully separate the content we need at a given time. It is extremely important to learn how to search safely because it can happen that we find fake or unverified content.

In addition to enabling or facilitating access to content, simpler processing, and processing of information, an individual should always keep in mind the ethical component when searching, using, and sharing content. Browsing social networks, gaming, or using other social content resources are just a few aspects of digital literacy. It should be noted that digital literacy includes creating your own digital content, while web pages are just one of the possible types of content that can be created. In this context, digital literacy is considered an ongoing and dynamic process, and digital literacy depends on the requirements of a single person. (Martin, 2018, S. 20) emphasizes that it is most likely dependent on the needs of the situation: since digital literacy is connected with digital competence, it is something that is changing in content, related to rapid changes in the educational and technological landscape.

We can say that literacy is ultimately a relative concept, because as in traditional literacy, media literacy and digital literacy are not the same in Austria, the Czech Republic, Albania, or Croatia. Given that we live in a time when knowledge in the context of technology is changing and

evolving rapidly, we need to react in the same way, ready and fast, all in order to slow down the generation of established models and differences.

Literature:

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