Being digital

Self-assessment: Using information

1: Introduction

Digital literacy skills empower you to work effectively and safely online whether you're at work, studying or at home. They can also help you when it comes to applying for jobs. This questionnaire is one of four that will help you to learn the skills you need to succeed in a digital age.

This questionnaire is made up of **seven** questions related to how familiar and confident you are with using the information you find online. This includes knowing how to find and record the details needed to reference the information sources you have used. At the end of all the questions feedback is given on each of them.

Learning outcome
By the end of this activity you should be able to identify which skills you need to become more confident in **Using information**.

Question 1
How confident are you at …

… assessing whether an online resource (e.g. web page, blog, wiki, video, podcast, academic journal article) or person is credible and trustworthy?

  A. I'm confident that I know how to ensure that the information I use is from a trustworthy source.

  B. I'm not sure how to judge how trustworthy the resources I find online are.

Question 2
How confident are you at …

… using information in different media (formats), for example, podcasts or videos?

A. I know how to access information that is delivered in a variety of media.

B. I have a general idea about the different formats – audio and video - but I'm not sure about what advantages each might offer.

Question 3
How confident are you at …

… knowing what plagiarism means, and why you should not plagiarise?

A. I understand what plagiarism means, and know how to use other people's work without plagiarising.

B. I have a limited understanding of plagiarism, and I'm not confident that I know how to avoid it.

Question 4
How confident are you at …

… providing references for the online resources you have used (e.g. citing references in assignments), and do you know what format to use?

A. I can confidently reference online resources.

B. I know the basics of how to reference, but would feel more confident if I knew how to do it properly.

Question 5
How confident are you at …

… keeping a record of all the relevant details of sources you find online, which you may need later for referencing, or to find the information again? Do you use any online software / tools to do this?

A. I use online software / tools to help me records of source details for the information I find online.

B. I'm not sure which online tools / software to use if I need to keep records of source details.

Question 6
How confident are you at …

… using social bookmarking to organise and share information? Are you registered to an online bookmarking site? Have you shared information using social bookmarking?

A. I have registered with a social bookmarking site, and make good use of it. I've also been able to share information I've gathered with others.

B. I've heard about social bookmarking, but don't have much experience of it. I'm not sure how to do it, or if it would be useful.

Question 7
How confident are you at …

… sharing files legally with others? Do you understand the legal implications of sharing files? Are you aware of the rights that exist to protect creative content?

A. I'm confident that I understand the legal implications, and am aware of the rights that protect creative content.

B. I don't know much about the legal implications of sharing files, and don't know very much about rights that protect creative content.

The aim of this activity has been to give you an idea about how confident you are at using information online.

The **Being digital** website can help you to improve your skills in areas where you are less confident (where you rated yourself as option B).

If you were very confident overall (where you rated yourself as option A), you might still benefit from working through some of the activities.

For topics that you are less confident in, you can improve your skills by working through the relevant **Being digital** activities which have been suggested in Appendix A (Feedback on the self-assessment questions).

The links in Appendix B below are a reminder of the **Being digital** activities that can help you to improve your skills in this area.

Appendix A: Feedback on the self-assessment questions

Question 1

Even if you are confident in assessing whether an online resource is trustworthy, it's always worth revisiting any guidance you can find for additional hints and tips. You will find a list of links to relevant **Being digital** activities in Appendix B.

With so much information online, you need to be able to assess whether the information you've found comes from a trustworthy source. You will sometimes find information online that is misleading or wrong, even on websites that 'look' very professional. It is also important to be able to separate opinion from fact.

There are skills that you can learn to do this, and general guidelines you can follow.

These activities provide guidance on how to assess online resources and people:
Deciding what to trust online
Deciding who to trust online
Evaluating using PROMPT

Question 2

Even if you are confident in using information in different media, it's always worth revisiting any guidance you can find for additional hints and tips. You will find a list of links to relevant **Being digital** activities in Appendix B.

Information today comes in a range of different formats, including video clips or podcasts stored online. These can often be downloaded from, or accessed by, a variety of mobile devices like mobile phones or tablets.

Being digital provides a link to a Common Craft video on podcasting:
Podcasting in plain English

Question 3

Even if you are confident in avoiding plagiarism, it's always worth revisiting any guidance you can find for additional hints and tips. You will find a list of links to relevant **Being digital** activities in Appendix B.

Plagiarising means using someone else's work without acknowledging it. Plagiarism can happen at universities, in online environments and at

work. The consequences of plagiarism can be far-reaching. This is why it is so important to develop skills in writing, including recognising where you need to reference people's work, and how to reference it properly.

This pathway contains a number of activities designed to help you understand what plagiarism is, and how to avoid it:
Being digital pathway: Avoiding plagiarism

Question 4

Even if you are confident in referencing online resources, it's always worth revisiting any guidance you can find for additional hints and tips. You will find a list of links to relevant **Being digital** activities in Appendix B.

A reference is a detailed description of the sources you have referred to in a piece of writing. Learning the principles of referencing will enable you to appropriately acknowledge whatever sources you use, whether for study or work. Reference guidelines, developed by academic or professional institutions, provide standards for the format referencing should take. If you follow these guidelines, your readers will have all the information they need to follow up any sources you've mentioned in your work.

This pathway contains an introduction to referencing, and a series on activities to help you understand how to reference books, website, ejournals and module texts:
Being digital pathway: Referencing your sources

Question 5

Even if you are confident in keeping a record of your online sources, it's always worth revisiting any guidance you can find for additional hints and tips. You will find a list of links to relevant **Being digital** activities in Appendix B.

When you find information online, it is useful to keep a record of details you may need later for referencing, or to find the information again. There is a number of online tools and software packages that make it easier to keep these records.

The following activity takes you through features of free referencing software and how to go about selecting the right tool for you:
Selecting a reference management tool

Question 6

Even if you are confident in using social bookmarking, it's always worth revisiting any guidance you can find for additional hints and tips. You will find a list of links to relevant **Being digital** activities in Appendix B.

When you find useful sites online you can store details about them online, using services such as Diigo. These online bookmarking sites allow you to save the web addresses and attach keywords to them, so that you can find them easily at a later date. The sites are accessible from any computer, phone or tablet. You are able to share the information with anyone with similar interests.

An activity on social bookmarking is being planned for the future.

Question 7

Even if you are confident regarding legal file-sharing, it's always worth revisiting any guidance you can find for additional hints and tips. You will find a list of links to relevant **Being digital** activities in Appendix B.

If you are sharing files online, you must take care to respect the copyright associated with that file. It's fine if you are sharing files containing work that you have created yourself. There are rights in place to protect your own work. And those same rights come into force if you share or distribute material that belongs to someone else.

Learning the basics of copyright, ownership and licensing will help you to remain within the law when you share files with others.

Activities on sharing files legally, copyright and Creative Commons licensing are being planned for the future.

Appendix B: Checklist of useful Being digital and Library activities

New activities are being developed on a regular basis, and will appear on the site over the coming months. The following is a checklist of activities referred to in this self-assessment activity.

Activity name	URL
Being digital pathway: Avoiding plagiarism	http://www.open.ac.uk/libraryservices/beingdigital/pathways/13/6
Being digital pathway: Referencing your sources	http://www.open.ac.uk/libraryservices/beingdigital/pathways/13/15
Deciding what to trust online	http://www.open.ac.uk/libraryservices/beingdigital/objects/24/index.htm
Deciding who to trust online	http://www.open.ac.uk/libraryservices/beingdigital/objects/12/index.htm
Evaluating using PROMPT	http://www.open.ac.uk/libraryservices/beingdigital/objects/87/index.htm
Podcasting in plain English	http://www.commoncraft.com/video/podcasting
Selecting a reference management tool	http://www.open.ac.uk/libraryservices/beingdigital/objects/149/index.htm