***Digital Literacy***

**Definition**

Digital literacy is defined as the ability to utilize “communication and information technologies to locate, evaluate, generate and communicate information, which requires both cognitive and technical skills,” (American Library Association, 2017, https://literacy.ala.org/digital-literacy/).

**Rationale and Intent**

Digital literacy creates new methods of learning and new ways for students to interact with their interests online and through other digital media. Students are no longer confined to just physical text when it comes to reading or learning more about topics of interest. Since they are immersed in digital environments, it is important they possess skills that enable them to utilize digital media effectively and ethically for collaboration, academic purposes, social and civic engagement and lifelong learning.

Digital literacy initially focused on digital skills and stand-alone computers, but the increased use of the internet and social media has shifted the focus to include mobile devices. Digital literacy does not replace traditional forms of literacy, but rather builds on and expands skills found in traditional forms of literacy, particularly information literacy. It should be thought of building upon skills that form the foundation of traditional forms of literacy (Jenkins, *Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture: Media Education for the 21st Century,* 2009). Digital literacy should be considered a part of the path to knowledge.

In the LA&S curriculum, certain skills have been prioritized, so that students have the opportunity to further develop them throughout their general education course of study. Courses designated as Critical and Creative Thinking across the Disciplines (CCTAD) courses must address at least one of these goals as a secondary skill. Digital literacy is one such goal, which can be designated as a secondary skill in a CCTAD course.

**Goal** (approved as a definition for critical thinking in AUC60, 2019)

Fitchburg State University students will effectively use information and communication technologies to explore ideas, solve problems, and find, evaluate, create, and communicate information in ways that require both cognitive and technical skills.

**Potential Course Objectives**

The objectives below are recommended as models for general education course syllabi. The list is not meant to be complete. Faculty should feel free to adopt these as course objectives, or they may develop their own.

Students will be able to:

* Use technical and cognitive skills to find, understand, evaluate, create, and communicate digital information in a wide variety of formats
* Effectively and appropriately use a number of technologies to locate and retrieve information, interpret results, and judge the quality of that information
* Explore the relationship between technology, personal privacy, and responsible and ethical use of information
* Recognize the usefulness of technology for life-long learning
* Use skills and technology to communicate and collaborate effectively with others
* Ethically and legally use digital media and materials
* Leverage multimedia compositional skills to create interactive digital reports
* Optimize web designs for improved site navigation and user experience
* Adapt open-source programs to meet project-specific needs
* Use computational tools to analyze and visualize data
* Apply best practices for encoding and structuring qualitative data
* Use skills and technology to actively participate in civic society and contribute to a vibrant, informed, and engaged community. (ALA Digital Literacy Taskforce, [What is Digital Literacy?](http://www.dla101.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/what-is-digilit-2.pdf) 2011)