Assessing Digital Literacy – A Framework for Developing a General Measure

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Defining Digital Literacy

The American Library Association and Wikipedia provide solid working definitions of digital literacy. "A digitally literate person will possess a range of digital skills, knowledge of the basic principles of computing devices, skills in using computer networks, an ability to engage in online communities and social networks while adhering to behavioural protocols, be able to find, capture and evaluate information, an understanding of the societal issues raised by digital technologies (such as big data), and possess critical thinking skills."

Assessing Digital Literacy—Four Components and Three Focal Areas

Workplace digital literacy is comprised of four hierarchical components:

- **Digital era concepts**. Focuses primarily on job-related communication and collaboration, such as platforms, channels, content creation and curation, crowdsourcing, cloud computing, and cybersecurity.
- **Digital tools and systems**. Digital tools include emails, instant messaging, Microsoft Office Suite, photo and video editors. Systems include software applications developed for specific purposes, such as accounting, business intelligence and learning management.
- **Social technology features**, platforms, and tools. Social technology includes blogs, customised aggregators, dashboards and portals, discussion forums, media sharing, user-generated profiles and wikis.
- **Digital engagement skills and tactics**. This component focuses on the skills required to use social and digital technologies efficiently, as well as the necessary judgement to use them effectively.

In considering how to develop a general measure for assessing workplace digital literacy, there are three focal areas primary concern for employers.

- **Communication and collaboration**. Ability to communicate and collaborate using digital technology is critical for an organisation to function efficiently and effectively.
- **Cybersecurity**. Individuals are the weakest link in protecting an organisation in cyberspace
- **Law and ethics**. Workers now have responsibility to protect organisation brand, IP, and trade secrets.

Building a Measure to Assess Digital Literacy

Any tool for assessing digital literacy should include questions addressing the relevant components in the context of each of the above focal areas. The creation of a tool for assessing digital literacy is possible, though there are plenty of nuances associated with the measurement components.