Digital literacy

In today's world it is a requirement to be digitally literate in order to be able to function in a capacity that enables one to be more successful whether it is at home, school, at our jobs or even looking for a job. Over the last few decades our environment has evolved into a digital environment. Being or becoming digitally literate is essential in being successful in this digital environment. Almost everything we do today requires some sort of digital knowledge or literacy. From surfing the internet to searching for a job to being able to perform our jobs, we are required to have some sort of digital literacy in order to be successful.

Dr. Judith Renyi, executive director of the Philadelphia Mayor's Commission on Literacy, said, " If you don't have digital literacy, you can't find a job, you can't apply for a job, you can't sustain a job. " " Very soon you won't be able to function at any level without digital literacy" (Shamlin, 2013). The main focus of this essay is to stress the importance of being digitally literate, which includes electronic devices such as cell phones and iPads although the main focus is on computer literacy.

It has been stated by Dr. Judith Reyni that " just about anything you're going to do in life, you're going to need these skills" (Shamlin, 2013). This statement alone should be a clue as to the importance of digital literacy today. In today's market, the need to learn as much as we can about computers and their programs become more and more important. This importance can be compared to driving a car. Without the ability to drive a car, it can be very hard to get or hold a job due to the fact that it would be really hard to get to work.

Most employers today even ask on the application as to whether or not you have reliable transportation. Well, being able to operate a computer to some degree is just as important. In today's day and age, you cannot even apply for a job without knowing how to operate a computer. Most of the employers out there put all of their information online and to be able to apply for that job, you have to use a computer. That applies to submitting your resume as well. The days of going from business to business, filling out applications and turning in resumes are long gone.

Nowadays when you go to a business to apply for a job, they tell you to go online to their website and apply there. Being digitally literate also relates to the everyday things that we do such as reading the newspaper or a magazine or even writing a letter. Most newspapers and magazines can be found online today and that can make things easier for us in our day to day lives. With that technology, we no longer have to carry around some giant newspaper or even a magazine. We have the ability to put them on our computers of even an iPad and access them from anywhere that you have internet access.

Plus having this technology allows us to be able to search for certain articles without having to scan through an entire newspaper or magazine. Along with having the ability to read newspapers and magazines digitally, those companies are also adding more pictures and links that just add that much more to the stories. Even the newspaper companies such as the New York Times have evolved with this digital trend by adding more color photos, charts, different fonts and even colored fonts in an attempt to make their publications more attractive.

While there are more adults today that are digitally literate, the younger generation, our children, are generally more digitally literate. A recent report from the Kaiser Family Foundation shows that children from 8 through 18 years of age spend 7 hours and 38 minutes each day consuming media, " which is almost the amount of time most adults spend at work each day, except that young people use media seven days a week instead of five" (Kinzer, 2010). Communication is another area in which being digitally literate can really be an advantage.

Just like in a work environment where emails are sent back and forth as a form of communication, the same thing can be done at home. A lot of time and money can be saved, making one more productive by being able to send an email versus a letter by mail. Not only can money be saved on a stamp, envelope and paper, but the recipient can get the email almost instantaneously. Not having to wait upwards of a week for the correspondence to reach its intended party, and then waiting for a response from the intended party can make us much more productive and obviously save lots of time.

Another important aspect of being digitally literate is the online college programs or certificate programs. A larger portion of the success of students in online programs is due to being digitally literate. Without a certain level of digital literacy, achieving success would be next to impossible in an online environment. Logging on to the school site, navigating around in the classroom and submitting discussions and assignments all require good computer skills and understanding.

Another example of digital literacy according to (Kinzer, 2010) would be to acknowledge that what people read and write, as well as how they use and understand what they read in digital environments, involves more than encoding and decoding alphabetic/linguistic elements. It also includes understanding things such as the blue links found on certain sites and in certain digital documents and that those links can provide even more information by taking them to another location.

In conclusion, it is very important that one thing be taken away from this paper and that is that being digitally literate needs to be a goal at the forefront of our minds and taken seriously. Whether it be applying for a job or just being more proficient at our current jobs, to being able to search for personal items on the internet or for a school project, to ensuring that our children understand the need and importance of being digitally literate and that we allow them to learn all they can about computers and digital technology because the requirement to become or remain digitally literate is not going to go away.

Striving to learn as much as possible concerning digital literacy is only going to allow us to be more powerful, presentable and marketable in today's continually evolving technological era. We all live in a world of technology today and it is very important to become digitally literate and maintain a certain level of digital literacy as it won't be long before having a computer and knowing how to use one efficiently will be practically a requirement in order to be successful both in attaining a job and keeping one.