

Digital Communication and Creation

Textbook

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Have you ever wondered how people share ideas, create amazing things, and work together online? In today's world, knowing how to communicate and create digitally is super important! This textbook will help you understand how to use different online tools to share your thoughts and build awesome digital products, both by yourself and with others.

Communicating Online

Just like you talk to your friends and family in person, you can communicate with people online using various tools. For instance, email is like sending a digital letter, great for formal communication or detailed information. Instant messaging (IM) tools like Google Chat or Microsoft Teams are perfect for quick, real-time messages, much like texting.

When you want to see and hear people from different places, video conferencing tools such as Zoom or Google Meet are ideal for meetings, online classes, or catching up. Discussion forums or online boards are websites where people can post questions, share ideas, and discuss topics, creating a big online conversation. Lastly, social media platforms like Instagram or TikTok allow you to share pictures, videos, and short messages with a wide audience, connecting you with people who share your interests. When communicating online, always remember to be respectful, think before you post because once something is online it's hard to take back, and protect your privacy by not sharing personal information with strangers.

Creating Digital Products

Beyond just talking, you can also use online tools to create digital products. A digital product is anything you make or design using technology that exists in a digital format. These products can be used to inform (teach people something), persuade (convince people of an idea), or entertain (make people laugh or enjoy themselves).

Some examples include presentations made with tools like Google Slides or Microsoft PowerPoint, which are great for informing or persuading. Websites, designed with platforms like Google Sites or Wix, act like digital brochures to share information or tell a story. You can also create videos, from short films to vlogs, using video editing software to entertain, inform, or persuade. Digital posters and infographics, often made with tools like Canva, combine text and images to quickly convey information. Finally, podcasts are audio recordings, similar to a radio show, that you can create to inform or entertain. When creating a digital product, you'll typically plan your goal and audience, then design it using your chosen tool, adding text, images, and videos. After that, you'll refine it based on feedback from others, and finally publish it, making your product available for others to see or use.

Developing Digital Fluency

In today's world, being able to use technology effectively isn't just about knowing how to click buttons; it's about achieving digital fluency. This means you can confidently and responsibly use digital tools to complete tasks efficiently. A key part of digital fluency is knowing how to select and use the appropriate digital tools for a given job – whether it's a word processor for writing, a spreadsheet for organizing data, or specific software for creative projects. It also means you've developed proper typing techniques and keyboarding skills, allowing you to input information quickly and accurately without constantly looking at your hands.

Beyond just using tools, digital fluency involves understanding responsible technology use, making smart choices about what you share and how you interact online. You'll also learn to use feedback (from teachers, peers, or even the software itself) to constantly improve how efficiently you work with digital tools. As you encounter new technologies, you'll find yourself relating previously learned concepts to these new challenges, building on your existing knowledge. Ultimately, digital fluency empowers you to solve problems by developing, testing, and refining technological processes, becoming a true master of your digital tasks.

Your Digital Project Challenge!

Now it's your turn to put your digital communication and creation skills to the test! Your challenge is to create a digital product to promote a local cause or event. You will work individually or in small groups to design and publish a digital product that either informs, persuades, or entertains people about something important happening in your community.

You could create an informative website or presentation about your town's history or a school event, a persuasive digital poster or video encouraging recycling or volunteering, or an entertaining podcast or short video showcasing local talent or fun facts. To get started, first choose your cause or event, then decide on the type of product you'll create. Next, plan your message to clearly convey what you want people to know or do. Choose the right online tools with your teacher or group, then design and create your product. Make sure to get feedback from classmates or your teacher to refine your work, and finally, publish and share your digital product for others to see! Remember to use effective communication throughout the project, especially if you're working collaboratively. Good luck, and have fun creating!

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Imagine you need to inform your entire school about an upcoming field trip, but you can only use one online communication tool. Which tool would you choose and why? What are the advantages and disadvantages of using that specific tool for this situation?
2. You are creating a digital product to persuade your community to reduce plastic waste. Would it be more effective to create a video, a website, or a digital poster? Explain your reasoning, considering which format might best engage your audience and convey your message.
3. Think about the idea of "digital citizenship." How do the communication skills and creation processes you've learned about in this textbook contribute to being a responsible and effective digital citizen? What are some potential negative impacts if people do not use these skills thoughtfully?