BUILDING DIGITAL LITERACY: A TRAINER'S GUIDE TO ONLINE RESOURCES AND LESSONS FOR LEARNING

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PURPOSE

The purpose of this toolkit is to identify online resources designed to build digital literacy through a variety of educational websites offering free course content and teaching tools in these topical areas:

- Computer hardware and software
- Basic use of the internet
- Online safety and cybersecurity
- Use of email and social media
- Skills for increasing employability
- Online financial activities and management
- Use of online programs and tools for building creative content

The toolkit is divided into three parts:

- Part I - Lesson Links for Building Digital Literacy: Teaching Tools and Online Resources (online lessons with learning and teaching materials organized by content area)
- Part II - Summary: Online Digital Resources (a description of key websites offering free, hybrid, and/or fee-based course content)
- Part III – Digital Skill-Building for Everyday Life: A Guide to Online Resources (a table showing specific content areas of study offered through several free educational websites).

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
National Digital Education Extension Team
Southern Rural Development Center
Advancing Digital Access
http://srdc.msstate.edu/ecommerce/advancing-digital-access.html

PART I: LESSON LINKS FOR BUILDING DIGITAL LITERACY: TEACHING TOOLS AND ONLINE COURSES

The Lesson Links outline directs users to organizations and websites offering free digital literacy courses. A description of available teaching tools and presentation formats are provided for each primary website, followed by a list of online courses organized by topic.

TEACHING TOOLS

Digital Skills Library: https://digitalskillslibrary.org
This site is one of the most comprehensive available, with free, online courses covering almost every topic of basic digital skills education. A complete glossary of digital terminology is included.

Goodwill Community Foundation: https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/
Teaching tips and tutorials for online and off-line instruction, lesson videos, printable lesson materials, and links to other online learning resources are available.

Google for Education: https://applieddigitalskills.withgoogle.com/c/en/curriculum.html and https://growonair.withgoogle.com/
Teaching tools include lesson plans, video presentations for each course, YouTube videos, rubrics on how to evaluate student work, and certificates of completion.

Digital Learn: https://training.digitallearn.org
Instructor guides and PowerPoint materials, course activity sheets, and other printable handouts are available to enhance teaching and learning.

Denver Public Library: https://denverlibrary.org/techclasses
Lesson plans, course handouts, and supplemental materials are accessible for trainers and students.

Good Things Foundation / Learn My Way: https://goodthingsfoundation.org/our-services/learn-my-way/
Audio course content and instruction, quizzes on course content, and supplemental learning activities are available to trainers and students.

Tech Life Unity: https://techlifeunity.com/ and https://techlifeunity.com/ultimate-guide-to-digital-literacy
Tutorials, articles, and videos covering course content are available to teachers and students, with additional resources provided for tech trainers.

Senior Planet: https://seniorplanet.org/classes and https://seniorplanet.org/videos and https://seniorplanet.org/on-demand/
Live online and in-person classes and on-demand interactive courses cover basic tech tools for everyday life.

Northstar: https://digitalliteracyassessment.org
Free instruction is obtained through audio-video presentations. Teaching tools include tutoring plans and guides for teaching, learning, and testing remotely or in-person at a Northstar-affiliated organization or institution.

Skillbase: https://skillbase.hks.harvard.edu/view-all-resourcesCourse access for students and trainers is through links to external learning websites, many of which offer video instruction, written transcripts, course material that can be downloaded for offline use, and certificates of completion.

Net Literacy: https://netliteracy.org/safe-connects/
Learning resources primarily focus on Internet safety for younger audiences through video presentations, with additional content designed for senior citizens. Trainers have access to lesson plans via PowerPoint presentations.

LESSON LINKS

Computer Basics

Hardware: Understanding the mouse, connections, ports, computer equipment, and operating systems

EQUIPMENT AND DEVICES:

https://digitalskillslibrary.org/device-ownership
https://digitalskillslibrary.org/mobile
https://digitalskillslibrary.org/online-life
https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/topics/computers/
https://denverlibrary.org/ctc/computer-basics-getting-started
https://digitallearn.org/courses/why-use-a-computer
https://digitallearn.org/courses/getting-started-on-a-computer
https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/topics/smartphonesandtablets/
https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/topics/technology-buying-guide/
https://learnmyway.com/explore-the-subjects/using-your-device/
https://assessment.digitalliteracyassessment.org/basic-computer-skills/practice/getting-started-with-computers
https://seniorplanet.org

OPERATING SYSTEMS:

https://digitalskillslibrary.org/device-ownership
https://digitallearn.org/courses/using-a-pc-windows-10
https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/topics/windows/
https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/topics/macos/
https://digitallearn.org/courses/using-a-mac-os-x
https://seniorplanet.org

Software: Using Microsoft Office and other programs and functions on the computer

https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/topics/office/
https://digitallearn.org/courses/microsoft-word
https://denverlibrary.org/ctc/computer-basics-saving-finding-files
https://learnmyway.com/explore-the-subjects/working-with-office-programs/
https://assessment.digitalliteracyassessment.org/ms-word-office2016/practice/creating-and-saving

Basic Internet: Understanding internet access, searches, browsers, and links

https://digitalskillslibrary.org/gateway-skills
https://digitalskillslibrary.org/information-skills
https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/topics/internet/
https://digitallearn.org/courses/basic-search
https://digitallearn.org/courses/intro-to-searching-videos-on-youtube
https://digitallearn.org/courses/cloud-storage
https://denverlibrary.org/ctc/computer-basics-internet
https://denverlibrary.org/ctc/search-engine-optimization-basics
https://learnmyway.com/explore-the-subjects/starting-to-use-the-internet/
https://techlifeunity.com/internet-basics
https://seniorplanet.org

Internet Safety and Cybersecurity

Strategies for maintaining the security of computer equipment and using the Internet in a safe and responsible manner

https://digitalskillslibrary.org/device-ownership
https://digitalskillslibrary.org/privacy-and-security
https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/topics/onlinesafety/
https://digitallearn.org/courses/internet-privacy
https://digitallearn.org/courses/online-scams
https://denverlibrary.org/ctc/digital-privacy-and-security
https://denverlibrary.org/ctc/viruses-and-malware-basics
https://techlifeunity.com/online-safety-privacy
https://digitallearn.org/courses/accounts-passwords
https://netliteracy.org/safe-connects/safe-connects-videos/safe-connects-resource-downloads/ (lesson materials for school-aged students through adults)
https://seniorplanet.org/videos (on privacy)

EMAIL COMMUNICATIONS:
Using email functions to enhance communication and perform skills

https://digitalskillslibrary.org/communication
https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/emailbasics/
https://digitallearn.org/courses/intro-to-email
https://digitallearn.org/courses/intro-to-email-2-beyond-the-basics
https://denverlibrary.org/ctc/computer-basics-email
https://learnmyway.com/explore-the-subjects/using-email/
https://assessment.digitalliteracyassessment.org/email/practice/understanding-email
https://seniorplanet.org/on-demand/ (Google tools; Gmail)

SOCIAL MEDIA SKILLS:
Using social media platforms for communication and marketing

https://digitalskillslibrary.org/creation   and   https://digitalskillslibrary.org/communication
https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/topics/socialmedia/ https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/topics/googleapps/ (focus on Google programs and tools)
https://digitallearn.org/courses/intro-to-facebook
https://digitallearn.org/courses/intro-to-skype
https://denverlibrary.org/ctc/marketing-social-media
https://denverlibrary.org/ctc/video-chat-basics
https://techlifeunity.com/social-media
https://seniorplanet.org/videos (social media)

Employability Skills

EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND CAREER PLANNING:
Avenues toward increasing job readiness

https://digitalskillslibrary.org/lifelong-learning
https://digitalskillslibrary.org/workplace
https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/topics/careerplanning/
https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/topics/educationandtraining/
https://techlifeunity.com/best-sites-for-adult-learning
https://seniorplanet.org

SEARCHING AND APPLYING FOR JOBS:
Preparing resumes and other important documents, searching for employment on the Internet, career networking, completing online applications, and preparing for job interviews

https://digitalskillslibrary.org/workplace
https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/topics/applying-for-jobs/
https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/topics/jobsearch/
https://techlifeunity.com/how-to-find-a-job-online
https://techlifeunity.com/what-is-linkedin
https://digitallearn.org/courses/online-job-searching
https://digitallearn.org/courses/applying-for-jobs-online
https://digitallearn.org/courses/creating-resumes
https://assessment.digitalliteracyassessment.org/career-search-skills/practice
https://techlifeunity.com/making-money-online
https://denverlibrary.org/ctc/make-resume-google-docs
https://denverlibrary.org/ctc/microsoft-word-resumes
https://denverlibrary.org/ctc/power-your-presentations
https://seniorplanet.org

MANAGING WORK ENVIRONMENTS:
Developing time management skills and tools for work

https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/topics/worklife/
https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/topics/workplaceskills/
https://denverlibrary.org/ctc/design-your-own-business-cards
https://denverlibrary.org/ctc/accounting-online-wave
https://denverlibrary.org/ctc/google-calendar-basics

MANAGING WORK ENVIRONMENTS:
Developing self-employment opportunities

https://growonair.withgoogle.com/#job_seekers

Employability Skills Continued

FINANCIAL SKILLS AND SHOPPING ONLINE:
Basic money skills and purchasing/selling online

https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/topics/money/
https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/topics/personal-finance/
https://learnmyway.com/explore-the-subjects/make-money-work/
https://digitallearn.org/courses/creating-a-basic-budget-with-excel
https://digitallearn.org/courses/buying-a-plane-ticket
https://learnmyway.com/explore-the-subjects/spending-money-online/
https://techlifeunity.com/online-shopping
https://seniorplanet.org

CREATIVE DIGITAL SKILLS:
Completing tasks and projects using creative programs and tools

https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/topics/creativity-and-design/
https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/basic-html/
https://denverlibrary.org/ctc/3d-printing-basics
https://denverlibrary.org/ctc/3d-printing-intermediate
https://denverlibrary.org/ctc/block-printing-workshop
https://denverlibrary.org/ctc/coding-basics
https://denverlibrary.org/ctc/create-a-logo
https://denverlibrary.org/ctc/css-basics
https://denverlibrary.org/ctc/wordpress-class
https://denverlibrary.org/ctc/video-editing-basics
https://denverlibrary.org/ctc/photoshop-basics
https://applieddigitalskills.withgoogle.com/c/en/artandgames
https://applieddigitalskills.withgoogle.com/c/en/curriculum.html

PART II: SUMMARY: ONLINE DIGITAL LITERACY RESOURCES

FREE RESOURCES:

Digital Skills Library: https://digitalskillslibrary.org
An open repository of free learning resources offering a comprehensive selection of online courses with teaching guides and quizzes. An extensive glossary of digital terms is also provided.

Goodwill Community Foundation: https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/
Free online courses, videos, and teaching guides in numerous areas of digital literacy; one of the most comprehensive sites available.

Google for Education: https://applieddigitalskills.withgoogle.com/s/en/home
Offers free online courses of interest, such as using Email, using other Google resources, job prep/seeking, and implementing specialized projects designed for elementary students up to adult learners (e.g. how-to activities and cultural lessons on racial tolerance and environmental protection). Teaching resources are included. Users sign in via Gmail to see complete curriculum.

Digital Learn: https://training.digitallearn.org
Free online courses on numerous content areas of digital literacy accessible to independent users, as well as through public libraries, with teaching resources. Topics covered are comprehensive and include tools to improve health and access to healthcare.

Denver Library: https://denverlibrary.org/ctc-classes
Free online courses and teaching guides for numerous content areas of basic digital literacy, including how-to projects using basic Internet and computer programs. Many courses are linked to external online resources (e.g. Goodwill/GCF, Udemy, Digital Learn). Some external resources are primarily available for registered library users, while a limited number of courses are available directly through this library site.

Good Things Foundation / Learn My Way: https://goodthingsfoundation.org/our-services/learn-my-way and https://learnmyway.com/explore-the-subjects
Based in the UK, numerous, free online resources on basic computer skills, using the Internet for multiple purposes, and preparing for a job search. A few courses focus on navigating public sector resources in the UK for health and other needs.

Tech Life Unity: https://techlifeunity.com/ and https://techlifeunity.com/ultimate-guide-to-digital-literacy
Free educational website teaching older adults and/or inexperienced Internet users how to use popular websites and internet-based applications (re: shopping online, online entertainment, social websites and apps, and understanding the basics of technology)

Senior Planet: https://seniorplanet.org/classes/ and https://seniorplanet.org/videos and https://seniorplanet.org/on-demand/
Live online and in-person classes and on-demand interactive courses cover basic tech tools for everyday life.

Grow with Google OnAir: https://growonair.withgoogle.com
Using Google tools, free virtual workshops (current and prior, on-demand) are available for developing practical career and tech skills and business acumen; website opens with a YouTube introduction.

Common Sense Education: https://commonsense.org/education/digital-citizenship
Free teaching resources for educators focusing on "digital citizenship" through practical lessons on how to safely and effectively use the Internet (e.g. using social media; developing communication skills, healthy relationships, and social equality and tolerance). Courses are designed for K-12 learners. Users establish an account for free access to full course content.

Net Literacy: https://netliteracy.org/safe-connects/safe-connects-videos/safe-connects-resource-downloads/
Free video courses on advocacy promoting Internet safety for multiple, daily purposes and for financial literacy.

Northstar: https://digitalliteracyassessment.org/ and https://digitalliteracyassessment.org/features#nsol
Free, basic lessons have been offered in the recent pandemic years focusing on using computers, using Email, Word docs, and career planning/job searching. Links to external training sites and short video courses are provided for free. Northstar provides additional in-depth training through affiliated institutions with users gaining access through those organizations.

Coursera: https://www.coursera.org/courses?query=free
Hundreds of free online courses for all ability levels, developed through multiple universities, are offered in the areas of health, business, arts and humanities, social sciences, physical science/engineering, computer science, personal development, IT, and data science. Courses are accessible in several languages. Fee-based opportunities are available for more in-depth study.

HYBRID, FEE-BASED, AND/OR INSTITUTIONAL-BASED RESOURCES:

Northstar: https://digitalliteracyassessment.org/
While a limited number of free courses are offered (see above list), Northstar provides additional in-depth training through affiliated institutions with users gaining access through those organizations.

Mozilla Foundation: https://foundation.mozilla.org/en/initiatives/web-literacy/core-curriculum/
This site is open-source, providing a core curriculum and teaching tools around creatively developing digital skills that help transform communities (the 21C Skills: problem-solving, creativity, collaboration, communication).

Skillbase (Harvard): https://skillbase.hks.harvard.edu/view-all-resources
The site is an extensive library catalogue of external, online career skills resources for job seekers and learners, such as through LinkedIn Learning and Udemy. Content may be accessed through free online sites or through sites offering free trial periods prior to required payment.

CIO (Chief Information Officer): https://cio.com/article/221812
CIO is an online, networking forum for IT professionals and business executives. The site lists 12 free, external, online resources for growing one's tech skills. The 12 sites may also offer expanded, fee-based, content on a variety of topics. The 12 sites are: Alison.com, Codeacademy, Coursera, Dash General Assembly, EdX, Harvard Online Learning, Khan Academy, MicrosoftLearn, MIT OpenCourseWare, Skillshare, Udacity, and Udemy.

LinkedIn Learning: https://linkedin.com/learning/
Multiple courses are offered on developing everyday literacy skills and using online programs and apps. A free one-month trial period is available prior to required payment for full access to resources.

Part III:

Digital Skill-Building for Everyday Life: A Guide to Online Resources (Updated 2025)

Toolbox of Digital Skills	Selected Free Online Resources[1]						
	Digital Skills Library	Goodwill Community Foundation	Google	Digital Learn	Denver Library	Good Things Foundation	Tech Life Unity
All About Computers							
Computer Basics and Skills	X	X		X	X	X	
Hardware (mouse, wires, connections, WIFI)	X	X		X	X	X	
Operating Systems (OS) (PC, Mac)	X	X		X			X
Saving and Recovering Data	X	X		X	X		
Tech Tips, Tricks, and Troubleshooting	X	X		X	X		
Software							
Basics of Windows and Mac OS	X	X		X	X	X	
Office for Windows and Mac (e.g. Word, Excel, PPT)	X	X		X	X	X	
Security Software	X	X		X	X	X	
The Internet							
Using Search Engines	X	X	X		X	X	X
Internet Basics and Tips	X	X	X		X	X	X
Using Information Correctly	X	X	X		X	X	X
Digital Media Literacy	X	X			X	X	X
Internet Safety and Safety for Kids	X	X	X		X	X	X
Using the Cloud							
Cloud storage strategies (e.g. Dropbox, Etsy)		X					X
Using Google Resources (e.g. Docs, Drive, Maps)	X	X	X		X		
Using Microsoft OneDrive and Office Online	X	X					
Email							
Using Email and Gmail – the basics and advanced uses	X	X	X		X	X	X
Social Media							
Blog Basics	X	X	X		X		X
Facebook (and Facebook for iPhone)	X	X			X	X	X
Instant Messaging (Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat)	X	X			X	X	X
Pinterest	X	X					X
WordPress Basics, Canva	X	X			X	X	X
Video-Conferencing (YouTube, Zoom, podcasts)	X	X				X	X

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Advancing Digital Access – Digital Literacy

Toolbox of Digital Skills	Digital Skills Library	Goodwill Community Foundation	Google	Digital Learn	Denver Library	Good Things Foundation	Tech Life Unity
Using Digital Devices							
Android Basics	X	X		X	X		X
Chromebook Basics	X	X					
Apps on Tablets	X	X		X	X		
iPad Basics	X	X			X		X
iPhone Basics	X	X			X		X
Purchasing Devices (tablets, phones, smartwatches)	X	X			X		
Reading and Watching Movies Online		X		X	X		X
Photo Editing and Graphic Design		X		X	X		
Career Planning and Job Seeking							
Beginning a New Career (planning and salaries)	X	X	X				
Careers Without College	X	X	X				
Online Education, Training, and Certifications	X	X					
Resumes, Cover Letters, and/or Interview Prep.	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Finding a Job Online and Networking (using LinkedIn)	X	X	X	X		X	X
LinkedIn and Other Resources	X	X		X			
Freelance Work and Part-time Jobs	X	X					
Creating a Website	X	X		X	X		
Financial Management							
Money Basics and Financial Tips	X	X				X	X
Accounting Apps and Quickbooks	X	X		X			
Online Purchasing							
Shopping and/or Selling Online (Etsy)	X	X		X		X	X
Online Banking and Payments (Venmo, PayPal)	X	X		X		X	X
Language Guides							
Basic Terminology in Different Languages	X	X					
Website Lessons Provided in Spanish	X	X		X	X		
Website Modules and Extras							
Flyers for Marketing Content		X					
Resources for Teaching, Training, and Certifications	X	X	X	X	X		X
Assistive Technology to Facilitate Use of Website		X					

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Digital Learning Websites	Link to Site	Notes
Digital Skills Library	https://digitalskillslibrary.org	Wide selection of online courses with a complete glossary of digital terms
Goodwill Community Foundation	https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/	
Google	https://applieddigitalskills.withgoogle.com	Must sign in via Google to see lists
Digital Learn	https://training.digitallearn.org	
Denver Public Library	https://denverlibrary.org/techclasses	
Good Things Foundation/Learn My Way	https://goodthingsfoundation.org/our-services/learn-my-way/ https://learnmyway.com/explore-the-subjects	Must register on the site before using free resources; based in the UK; a few lessons on navigating UK-based resources.
Tech Life Unity	https://techlifeunity.com/	Contains popular websites and applications for shopping online, online entertainment, social websites and apps, and tech basics.
Senior Planet (AARP)	https://seniorplanet.org https://seniorplanet.org/on-demand/ https://seniorplanet.org/videos/	Live online and in-person classes and on-demand interactive courses cover basic tech tools for managing everyday life.