

SDSL's Cornerstone Newsletter

South Dakota State Library's e-newsletter

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Incorporating Digital Literacy in Your Library (Part 1)

From the desk of [Cheyenne Chontos](#), Library Technology Coordinator

As libraries continue to serve their communities as hubs of information and technology, librarians are hearing the phrase "digital literacy" more and more. But what does digital literacy mean, and why is it important to consider?

The American Library Association's Digital Literacy Task Force defines digital literacy as "the ability to use information and communication technologies to find, evaluate, create, and communicate information, requiring both cognitive and technical skills." Digital literacy - just like reading or mathematics - is a skill that can be taught and improved with time, mentorship, and practice.



Libraries today have a critical role not only in providing appropriate access to the technology tools that their patrons need but also to the digital literacy skills in order to use those tools effectively and responsibly.

“Sure, digital literacy seems important,” you might be thinking, “but how do I know what digital literacy services my library should provide?”

As you brainstorm what kind of digital literacy services you would like to provide, consider these questions about your library and patrons:

- What is your role in the library, and how does that role interact with technology?
- What does your patron population look like? What are their technology needs that you have noticed?
- Is there a population of people you would like to draw to your library? What might their technology needs be?
- What kinds of technology services, classes, and programs do you currently offer? Are there any others you would like to offer in the future?
- What kinds of technology services, classes, and programs have you seen provided at other libraries that you would like to implement in your library?
- What are your digital literacy goals? What would you like your patrons to take away from your digital literacy services?
- What digital literacy resources can you provide your patrons?

Reaching out to your current patrons, community leaders, other community organizations, and members of the population you would like to reach is also a good way to find what digital literacy services your library could provide. The best way to get to know the needs of your patrons is often by asking them directly!

If you have a specific question regarding digital literacy or technology in your library, please contact SDSL's Library Technology Coordinator, Cheyenne Chontos at cheyenne.chontos@state.sd.us or 605-295-4330.

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