

What is Digital Literacy?

Digital literacy is having the knowledge, skills and confidence to keep up with changes in technology. Computers are increasingly part of everyday life. They've changed how we do things, and they're going to keep changing how we do things. To keep up, we need to keep learning so that we can continue to thrive at home, at work and in the community. Being digitally literate means being able to adapt to the changes brought about by computers in ways that make sense to your life.



Digital Literacy in Canada

- Estimates say that around 84% of jobs in Canada currently require the use of a computer and basic technical skills (*Information and Communications Technology Council, 2016*) and that even low-skilled jobs increasingly require a basic level of digital literacy (*Essential Skills Ontario*).
- Some barriers people experience in developing their digital literacy include: lack of digital access (hardware, software, internet); limited literacy and numeracy skills; financial or geographical barriers; not seeing themselves reflected in the field; intimidation and fear of failure (for both beginner and more advanced students); and lack of intermediate level programs (*Levelling Up, 2018*).
- A 2016 report by the Information and Communications Technology Council found that 40% of Canada's Information and Communications Technology workers are immigrants. This number is much higher than in any other profession. Most of these immigrants are permanent residents, while only 4% are temporary foreign workers. This suggests that Canada is focusing on immigration to fill the shortage of skilled digital jobs instead of educating its graduates.
- Many working-age Canadians struggle with problem solving in technology-rich environments. Of these Canadians, those in underrepresented groups in the Canadian workforce, such as Indigenous populations, immigrants, language minorities, and young people (ages 16-24) (*Statistics Canada, 2013*).
- A 2015 Ipsos Reid study found that 9% of Canadians report that they do not subscribe to or have access to the Internet at home. Canadians who do not subscribe to or have access to the Internet are usually older (over 55 years old) and less educated. They also, on average, have much lower household incomes (an average of \$44,000 per year).