

## Literacy in a Digital Age

The term Web 2.0 has become increasingly common to describe the current format of the Internet where any individual with an Internet Connection can contribute their thoughts interactively to a website. Common Web 2.0 technologies include blogs and Wiki's, like Wikipedia. The estimated number of active blogs in is the range of 180 million (number depends on the source), and Wikipedia claims that in 2007 it had more that 400,000 editors contributing to their articles. As computers and Internet enabled smartphones becoming ever more common, how do we prepare students to effectively sort through this information overload?

At RJSHS we are looking at ways to develop the digital literacy skills of our students. Digital Literacy is often defined as *the awareness, ability, and attitude necessary to understand and use information delivered electronically in meaningful and practical ways*. There are certain skills that will help learners to deal with the volume of information that is available to them via the Internet. Some of these skills include:

- Developing strategies for searching out relevant, quality information using Internet search engines like Google or Yahoo;
- Understanding what different domain names, or Internet Addresses, mean and how they are commonly used to categorise different types of websites;
- Developing analytical and critical thinking skills that help to identify features of quality information;
- Discerning between fact and opinion using multiple sources for information;
- Selecting and using the right electronic tool to meet the learner's needs;
- Organising information based on its relevancy to learner's needs;

- Using information responsibly by giving credit and properly citing sources;
- Being able to use technology appropriately to create and represent ideas and concepts in meaningful ways;
- Being aware of safety and privacy concerns when using different types of electronic media.

Google has published helpful introductory resources for digital literacy:

<http://www.google.com/educators/digitalliteracy.html>

<http://www.20thingsilearned.com/>