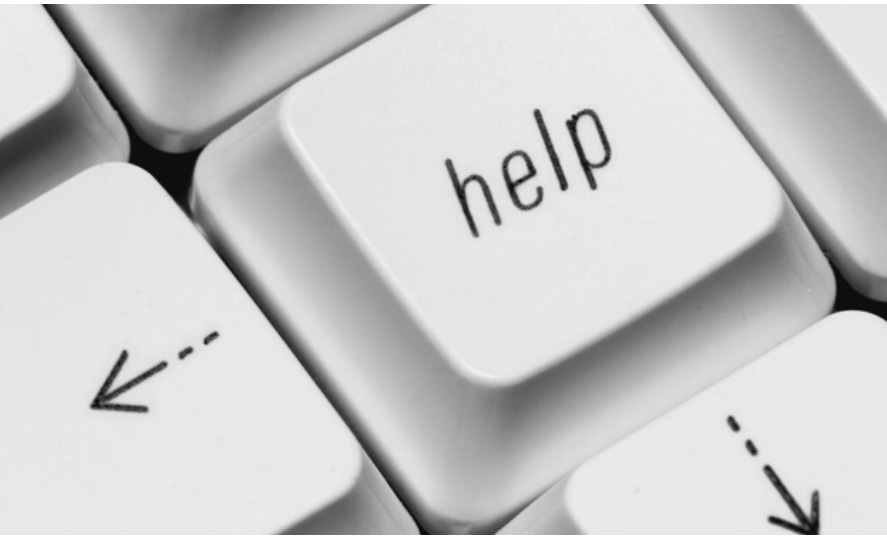


IS DIGITAL LITERACY THE NEW LITERACY?

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO BE DIGITALLY LITERATE IN TODAY'S WORLD?



The origin of the word literacy refers to the ability to read and write at a basic level. However, in today's ever-changing world, with all the advancements in technology and the internet, the definition of what it means to be "literate" has changed drastically. Literacy has evolved into a new concept - digital literacy.

According to the UNESCO report "Digital Literacy and Beyond", "digital literacy is the ability to define, access, manage, integrate, communicate, evaluate and create information safely and appropriately through digital technologies and networked devices for participation in economic and social life."

Although more and more people are aware of the importance of digital transformation in their daily lives - everything that we are using or consuming implies, directly or indirectly technology - there is still a long journey to go.

BENEFITS OF DIGITAL LITERACY:

- *Helps to learn faster, lookup facts, words and data about any subject;*
- *Helps to make better decisions because it becomes possible to search, study, analyze and compare everything*
- *Keeps people connected, no matter how far they are*
- *Saves hours per month for tasks that could only be done offline in the past, such as, go to the bank or to the store;*
- *In today's world, it is one of the essential requirements for most job positions*

An example of this occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic when we saw the need to purchase products and pay bills through technology and most consumers did not have the minimum knowledge to do so safely.

Being digitally literate is also an essential requirement for entering the job market. Employers expect their workforce to have the skills needed to live, work and thrive in a digital society - putting those who are not familiar with the digital world from an early age at a competitive disadvantage.



Are our schools preparing the new generations for future challenges?

Leading teachers around the world highlight the importance of digital literacy for building a new generation of learners that as they enter adulthood, will be better equipped to solve problems, think critically and achieve higher-level positions.

This new reality is reflected in growing concerns by governments - the truth is that many students still lack basic digital skills.

Aware of the need in helping the new generation become fluent in digital literacy, several countries around the world are investing in educational micro-clouds - a simple solution that can assure that all the students in a school can have access to a 21-century education, that will prepare them for the challenges of a digital future.

Micro-clouds are already being used in more than 55 countries with enormous success. The implementation process in schools is simple, fast, does not require a large financial or infrastructural investment, and can even be used in schools with power limitations.

Once connected to the micro-cloud, students and teachers have access to a complete cloud-based learning environment where they can find pre-uploaded education content and applications. This means that even if schools have constraints on internet connectivity it is possible to have access to up-to-date digital textbooks, interactive educational games, e-books, and well-known educational content such as Khan Academy, pHet Education, or even YouTube videos.

By using these resources in the classroom, students will feel more familiar with technology and will have the opportunity to develop their much-needed digital literacy.