Reflecting on digital scholarship competences

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Context

- This presentation summarises the findings of research reported in a paper, "Reflecting on digital scholarship competences" due for publication in SCONUL Focus in July 2014

- This work was funded by SCONUL through their participation in the JISC Developing Digital Literacies programme

- It is part of a wider project, Research Information Literacy and Digital Scholarship (RILADS) which was funded by Research Information Network (RIN) and SCONUL.

Baseline survey

- As part of its involvement in the JISC Developing Digital Literacies (DDL) programme [1], SCONUL took a survey of members to identify areas of interest around developing staff digital scholarship competences.

- The survey was designed and administered by a small group of information professionals (Sara Marsh (University of Bradford); Alison Mackenzie (Edge Hill University) and representatives from the SCONUL Working group on Information Literacy, Cathie Jackson (Cardiff); Helen Howard (Leeds)), with direction, contributions and feedback from the SCONUL Executive Board. [2]

Baseline survey

- The survey was principally aimed at heads of service, university librarians or other members of a senior management team who are responsible for the strategic direction of the service. 53 institutions responded representing a response rate of around 30%. [2]

- The findings were used to inform the signposting of key outputs of the DDL programme in order to maximise the value of these outputs for the SCONUL membership.

- The signposting ('Mapping Resources to Competences' [3]) has been published elsewhere on the SCONUL website.

- Here, a discussion is presented of the reflective commentary provided by the participants of the survey, framed within the key survey themes.

Six key literacies

- The opening section of the survey identified six key literacies, using a list drawn up by JISC [4]:
    - ICT / computer literacy,
    - information literacy,
    - media literacy,
    - communication and collaboration,
    - digital scholarship
    - learning skills.
- Participants were asked for their assessment of the digital capabilities of staff whose core roles were in the areas of student support and academic liaison.
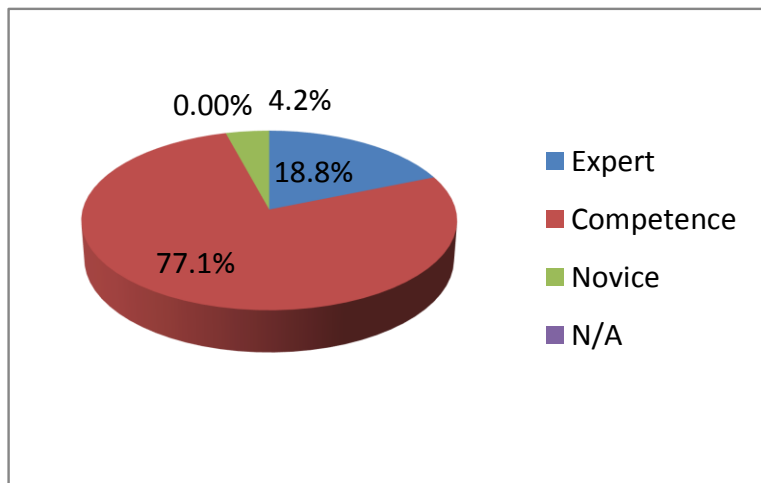
Key issues

- Policy, strategic development and organizational change,

- networks and collaborations,

- good practice case studies and
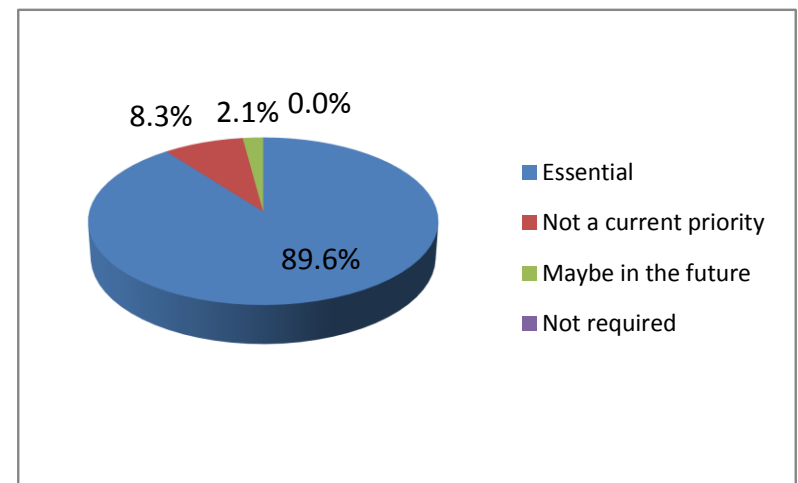
- continuing professional development frameworks

ICT/computer literacy

"the ability to adopt and use digital devices, applications and services in pursuit of goals, especially scholarly and educational goals"

Staff expertise

0.00% 4.2%
18.8%
77.1%

- Expert
- Competence
- Novice
- N/A

Importance of staff developing expertise in this area

8.3% 2.1% 0.0%
89.6%

- Essential
- Not a current priority
- Maybe in the future
- Not required

[2]

ICT/computer literacy

"very variable between different individuals and groups of staff"

"levels of competence often rely on individual's enthusiasm for technology"

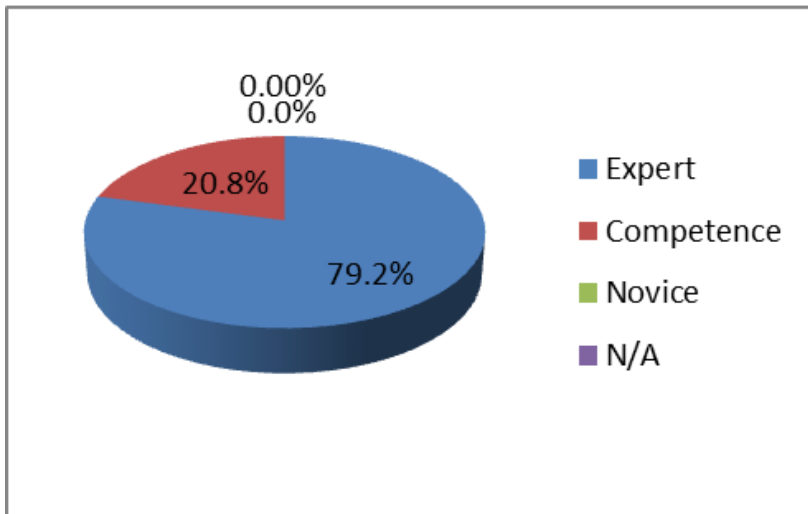*"preference is for all staff to be expert, but this is not currently the case for those on lower grades"*

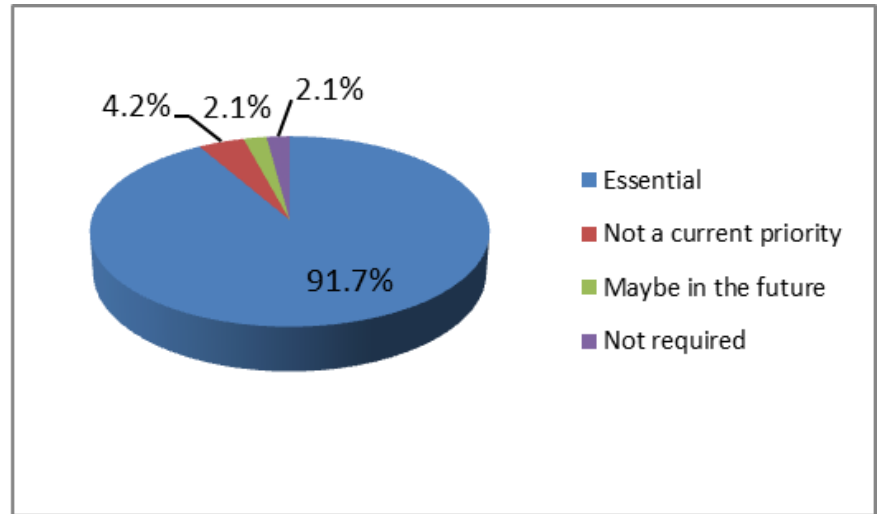*"need to upskill staff so that they can deal with more and more devices and software"*

Information literacy

"the ability to find, interpret, evaluate, manipulate, share and record information, especially scholarly and educational information"

Staff expertise

0.00%
0.0%
20.8%
79.2%

- Expert
- Competence
- Novice
- N/A

Importance of staff developing expertise in this area

4.2% 2.1% 2.1%
91.7%

- Essential
- Not a current priority
- Maybe in the future
- Not required

[2]

Information literacy

"traditional library function"

"some staff are experts, however, there is a lack of consistency of expertise"

"to develop skills as the information landscape changes"
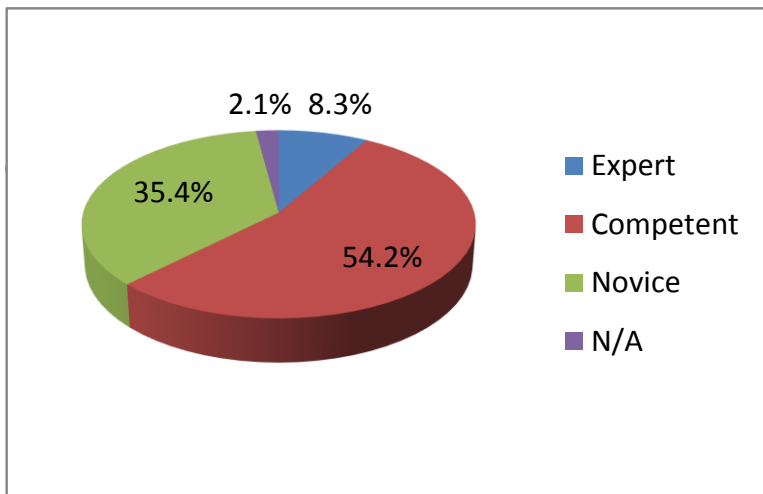
"keeping up to date with best practice"

"staff are expert but some are probably at novice so there is currently quite a mix"
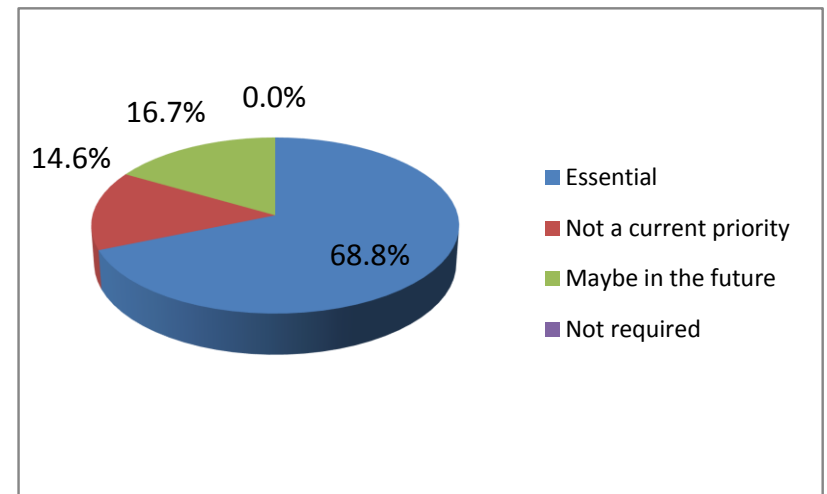
"continuous development is essential"

Media literacy

"the ability to critically read and creatively produce academic and professional communications in a range of media"

Staff expertise

Expert 8.3%
Competent 54.2%
Novice 35.4%
N/A 2.1%

Importance of staff developing expertise in this area

Essential 68.8%
Not a current priority 14.6%
Maybe in the future 16.7%
Not required 0.0%

[2]

Media literacy

"depends on institutional position"

"depends on discipline"

"this is an area I see as important but due to other work needing to take place it won't be prioritised"

"I am not sure we have time to improve media literacy, although I foresee a strong need in the near future"
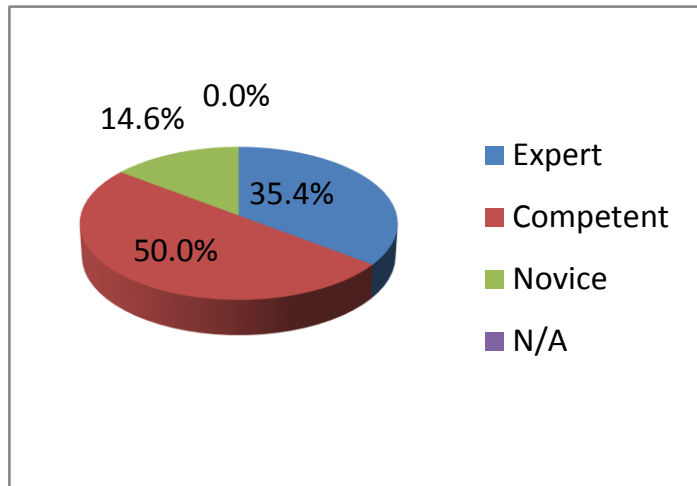
"library staff are not heavily involved in developing staff and students media literacy capabilities, especially in the terms of creation of material, although some staff do have these skills and help when asked."

"need to address balance of which skills should be provided by librarians and which by academics (or both). I would like to see this balance shift towards librarians."
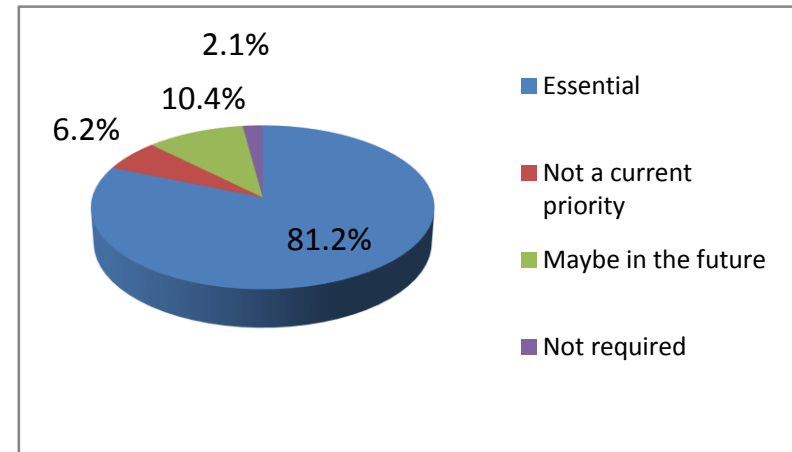
Communication and collaboration

"the ability to participate in digital networks of knowledge, scholarship, research and learning and in working groups supported by digital forms of communication"

Staff expertise

14.6%
0.0%
35.4%
50.0%

- Expert
- Competent
- Novice
- N/A

Importance of staff developing expertise in this area

2.1%
10.4%
6.2%
81.2%

- Essential
- Not a current priority
- Maybe in the future
- Not required

[2]

Communication and collaboration

"depends on institutional position"

"an area for development"

"a need for more communication and collaboration in order to reduce workloads and share re-use content being produced"
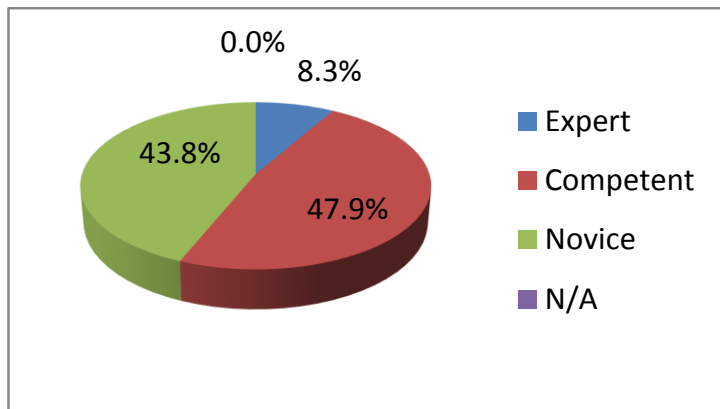
"necessary for sharing information in ways that learners want to see it"

"well established in Academic Liaison and Learning Development Teams, Facebook, blogs, ning, twitter and other social media based collaboration"
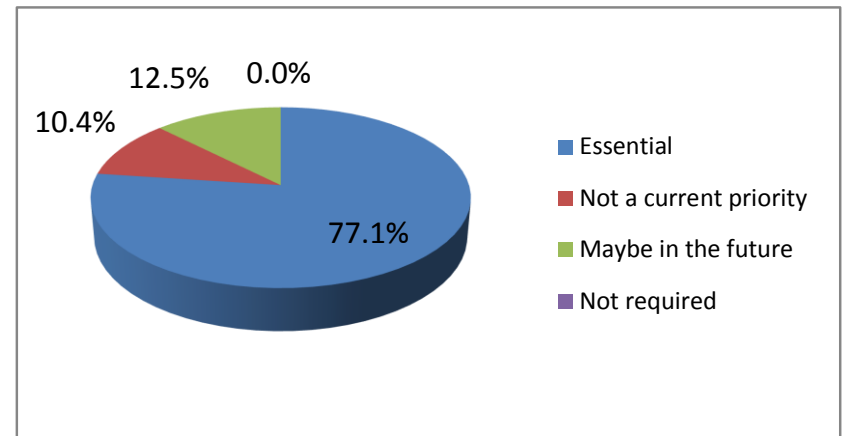
Digital scholarship

"the ability to participate in emerging academic, professional and research practices that depend on digital systems"

Staff expertise

- 0.0%
- 8.3%
- 43.8%
- 47.9%

■ Expert
■ Competent
■ Novice
■ N/A

Importance of staff developing expertise in this area

- 12.5%
- 0.0%
- 10.4%
- 77.1%

■ Essential
■ Not a current priority
■ Maybe in the future
■ Not required

[2]

Digital scholarship

- digital scholarship: the ability to participate in emerging academic, professional and research practices that depend on digital systems. For example, use of digital content (including digitised collections of primary and secondary material as well as open content) in teaching, learning and research, use of virtual learning and research environments, use of emergent technologies in research contexts, open publication and the awareness of issues around content discovery, authority, reliability, provenance, licence restrictions, adaption/repurposing and assessment of sources.

[4]

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Digital scholarship

"an area of growing importance for us"

"not well understood or relevant to some student support"

"emerging field but important to develop especially for staff support"

"pockets of good practice in the service"

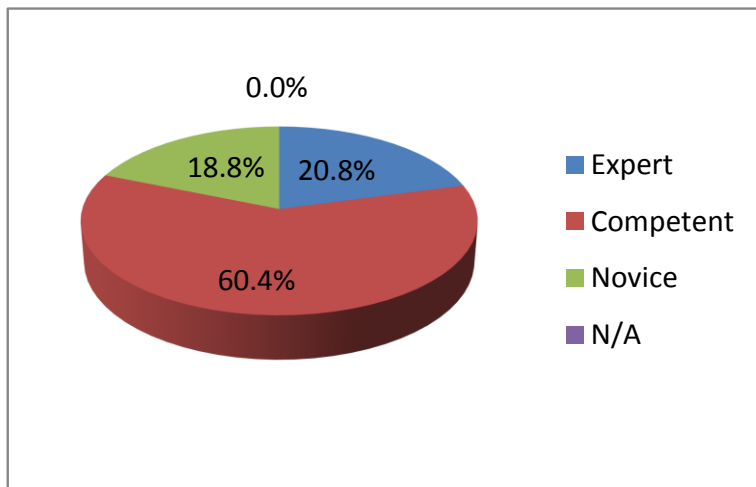*"in the core roles with student support and academic liaison. Some knowledge sharing is needed"*

"librarians and learning technologists have an expert awareness"

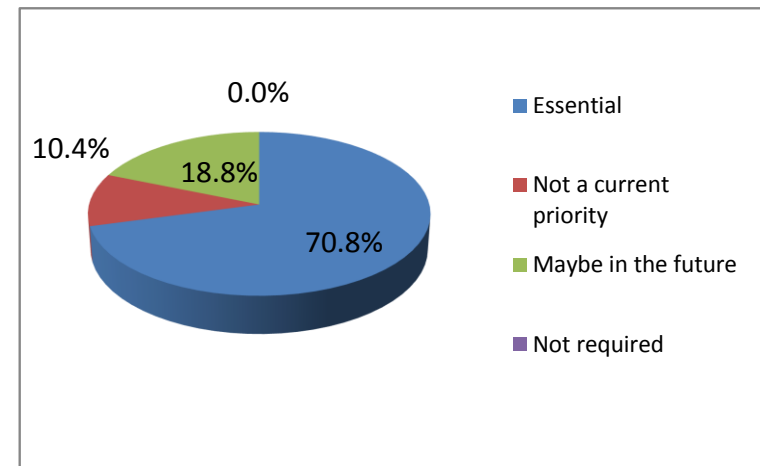*"[may not] have all the tools required to repurpose digital material"*

Learning skills

"the ability to study and learn effectively in technology-rich environments, formal and informal"

Staff expertise

- Expert — 20.8%
- Competent — 60.4%
- Novice — 18.8%
- N/A — 0.0%

Importance of staff developing expertise in this area

- Essential — 70.8%
- Not a current priority — 10.4%
- Maybe in the future — 18.8%
- Not required — 0.0%

[2]

Learning skills

"again a lot of work is needed here - while there is some knowledge there is not enough. Staff need to be broader in their outlook than they currently are"

"several staff have teaching qualifications, so again, a big range of expertise"

"not a priority but useful to have"

"for our Learning skills staff"

"the range of expertise varies across these roles. E-Learning advisers and Academic Learning advisers are competent and experts in this field, Academic Librarians range from Competent to Novice, Learning Advisers are novices"

Digital literacy lens on the seven pillars

Identify	Scope	Plan	Gather	Evaluate	Manage	Present
Understands:	**Understands:**	**Understands:**	**Understands:**	**Understands:**	**Understands:**	**Understands:**
The concept of digital literacy within an educational setting **The Internet** is not regulated but content may be structured and regulated in a variety of ways depending on the requirements of the provider **Technology** is constantly evolving and the exploration and evaluation of new and emerging information systems is a lifelong process **The lifecycle** of digital content, including issues around provenance, sharing and long-term access and preservation **The benefits and limitations** of using different forms of digital content, tools and technologies to meet specific needs	**Issues** around copyright, IPR and CC licences in relation to the use and creation of digital material **The need** to address issues of accessibility relating to digital content **The characteristics** of different digital publication formats, the functionality available within software platforms and the benefits and limitations of these in relation to the task **The impact** of online collaboration and networking as a means of developing, exchanging and communicating information	**How to** search for digital content using appropriate tools and techniques **The differences** between search tools (operating within and between environments), recognising their benefits and limitations **The impact** of sharing digital content **How the use** of different online communication tools can extend reach and enable teamwork and collaboration **Where to** locate and publish digital content for formal publication purposes and for information exchange purposes, appreciating the differences between the two	**The range** of different forms of digital publication and media, the different audiences they are designed for and how they are organised **Issues around** the popularity of a resource versus its academic quality **How digital** technologies are providing collaborative tools to create and share knowledge and the implications this has on gathering specific information. **The risks** of operating in a virtual world and how they can be mitigated **The importance** of appraising and evaluating results of online searches	**The need to** make choices in the use of different technologies to meet specific needs **Issues of** quality, accuracy, relevance, credibility, format and accessibility relating to digital information **How to** assess the profile and visibility of digitally published information using analytic functionality and tools **The need to** be a critical user of digital technologies **The importance** of citation of digital resources in learning and research contexts	**The need** to handle, store and disseminate digital information and data in a responsible and ethical way **Issues** of plagiarism **The principles** of citing and referencing digital sources and formats to enable verification **The need** to keep systematic records of digital sources using relevant technology **How** technologies can be used to personalise individual and shared digital environments **How** security profiles can be used to manage levels of interaction	**The need** to select a communication approach suitable for the audience **Issues** around accessibility of digital information, formats and compatibility with accessibility software **The importance** of online security and privacy **How to** communicate appropriately online **The need** to consider the digital self and ones online presence **That new** technologies allow for information in new ways (blogs, wikis, open access)
Is able to:	**Is able to:**	**Is able to:**	**Is able to:**	**Is able to:**	**Is able to:**	**Is able to:**
Recognise the importance of skills in locating, creating managing and sharing information through a variety of digital forms **Identify** gaps relating to the use, application or development of digital environments and tools **Continuously assess** how the use of digital content and tools could enhance academic practice **Recognise** where digital solutions can meet a specific information task or need	**Identify** gaps in knowledge relating to digital tools or content **Identify** search tools for locating quality digital material **Assess** different digital formats and select those to meet current need **Use** new tools and technologies as they become available and evaluate them for suitability **Assess** how online collaboration can enhance academic practice	**Identify** appropriate online search techniques **Remotely access** external digital sources in order to extend opportunities for discovery **Assess** which form(s) of digital media best meets the criteria identified **Use different** online communication approaches to extend reach **Assign** meta-data tags to content to enable future discoverability	**Use a range** of digital retrieval tools and technology effectively **Access**, read and download digital information and data **Engage in** online collaboration and networking to access and share information	**Assess** the suitability of digital content for the intended audience **Assess** the quality, accuracy, relevance, credibility, format and accessibility of digital material **Read** online information critically, taking into account access restrictions **Maximise** discoverability of own digital material using indexing strategies	**Use** appropriate tools to organise digital content and data (social bookmarking, bibliographic software) **Cite and** reference electronic sources appropriately **Manage** digital resources effectively taking account of version control, file storage and record keeping issues **Personalise** the digital environment according to need	**Communicate** effectively in a digital environment, using appropriate tools, to meet audience needs, taking account of accessibility issues **Confidently use** the digital media appropriate for presentation **Develop** an online personal profile using appropriate networks and technologies **Stay** safe and, if necessary, private in the digital world **Select** appropriate publication and dissemination outlets to share information

[5]

The digital literacy lens of the Seven Pillars

"the lens is a very useful tool to measure staff competencies in the first instance particularly academic liaison librarians. It will also enable the Service to map and evaluate its information and digital literacy teaching"

"skilled at using technology for administration and management as well"

"all Library staff (well most probably the vast majority university staff who support student learning) should have the understanding and skills listed in the lens"

"keeping practice and therefore the lens up to date as technologies develop will be key to ensuring the usefulness of it as a tool to staff & managers"

"thought it is more describing the capabilities of our end-users rather than our staff"

"staff can't be expert in all areas"

"different grades of staff do have different levels of understanding and skills".

The digital literacy lens of the Seven Pillars

"Ongoing information, training and development opportunities for groups of staff"

"a small team of digital skills supporters … supported by the centre for development of L&T"

"internal & external training"

"identifying in-house, free, and low-cost courses for skilling up staff."

"appraisals leading to individual action plans (with) external events and peer supported activity"

"strategic changes to the student curriculum"

"trialling iPads"

"involvement of the academic liaison librarians in the selection, implementation and promotion of digital resources and content; on the job experience of using digital tools"

"Technology Enhanced Learning team (who) are developing skills by using and promoting Blackboard (etc)"

More valuable ideas can be read by accessing the comments document [6] in full via the JISC Design Studio.

Institutional perspectives

"mostly ad hoc and largely dependent on personal contacts"

"trying to maximise usage of library staff as leaders in this area but is slow work as current academic can be reluctant to change practices"

"part of the Libraries Business Plan but also an informal commitment on the part of Academic Development"

"included in cross university working groups"

"approval of the inclusion of digital literacy in every programme achieved by agreeing this through formal channels University Teaching and Learning Committee, embedded in academic guidelines for programme validation and review"

"a new Teaching and Learning Strategy in which digital literacy is a key priority"

"LLS Director is working closely with Director of LT and other senior colleagues on the development of a new Learning and Teaching strategy for the university"

"the service is working jointly with another university department to develop the institution's strategic position"

"other key service providers e.g. Careers, e-learning team, academic support office etc."

"further work to be done to embed this in university priorities, not seen as a current priority compared with other issues, though some academic staff are on board"

Key issues

- Policy, strategic development and organizational change,

- Networks and collaborations,

- Good practice case studies and

- Continuing professional development frameworks

The evidence is clear

- SCONUL members are aware of the issues around continuing staff development around all forms of literacies.

- They are working across sectors and departments.

- They are ensuring the voice of the library is heard in the constantly changing strategic education landscape.

- Although the detail of individual experiences may vary according to the particular context of that organization, and some may be further down the road than others, it is important to continue these conversations.

Acknowledgements

References

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5. SCONUL (2013) The SCONUL 7 Pillars of Information Literacy through a Digital Literacy 'lens', available online at http://www.sconul.ac.uk/publication/digital-literacy-lens [accessed 11 Jun 2014]

6. SCONUL (2013) Reflections on developing information literacies and digital scholarship in academic library staff, available online at http://jiscdesignstudio.pbworks.com/w/file/fetch/70361585/SCONUL_survey-comments.pdf [accessed 11 Jun 2014]