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Tracing the Global Trend on the Study of Digital Literacy: A Scientometric Analysis

Manash Esh (University of North Bengal, India) and Saptarshi Ghosh (University of North Bengal, India)

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Abstract

Using the Scopus database, this paper aims to quantify global research output on digital literacy (DL) from 2011 to 2020. In addition, there were 7,388 documents and 42,504 citations. The average number of citations received per publication was 5.63. The result of the study depicts that the growth of publication on digital literacy has an incremental trend, and year-wise citation is also found to increase from 64 to 13,163 during the study period. Furthermore, the research found that relative growth rate (RGR) and doubling time (DT) had a fluctuating pattern throughout the study. "Internet skills and the digital divide" was found to be the leading article among the most important source titles used for the publication of DL studies, with 368 citations. However, the Journal of Medical Internet Research received the highest mean citation per document (24.26), and G. Merchant was identified as the most prolific author with a mean citation per document of 24.38.

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1. Introduction

Digital Literacy is best defined with a different point of view at the IGI-Global Dictionary website with 117 pinpointed definitions. According to the source, "Literacy in digital media, development of use capacity, understanding and creation of **digital** media that provide a critical analysis of **digital** content and products" (<https://www.igi-global.com/dictionary/digital-literacy/7664>) (<https://www.igi-global.com/dictionary/digital-literacy/7664>). Digital literacy measures a person's "the ability to use information

and communication technologies to find, evaluate, create, and communicate information, requiring both cognitive and technical skills." (American Library Association (ALA), 2012, p. 2). Digital literacy has been around for a long time, and the concept has grown over time. Its origins can be traced to the end of the 1960s, when traditional meanings of 'literacy' failed to account for an essential aspect of society's increasingly visual media. The term "**digital literacy**" was first described as

Digital literacy is the ability to understand and use information in multiple formats from a wide range of sources when it is presented via computers (Gilster, 1997, p. 1).

The description by Gilster regarding digital literacy vouches for definitional closeness to information literacy. In his article published in 2001, he stated that literacy means the "ability to use language in its written form" (Bawden, 2001, p. 4).

In its extended form "digital literacy is the ability to access, manage, understand, integrate, communicate, evaluate and create information safely and appropriately through digital technologies for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship. It includes competencies that are variously referred to as computer literacy, ICT literacy, information literacy and media literacy" (UNESCO, 2018, p. 6).

The Alexandria Proclamation of 2005 demystifies information literacy and continuous learning as the "beacons of the Information Society, illuminating the courses to development, prosperity, and freedom (Garner, 2006, p. 3). The High-Level Colloquium on Information Literacy and Lifelong

Learning also uttered that information literacy "empowers people in all walks of life to seek, evaluate, use and create information effectively to achieve their personal, social, occupational and educational goals. It is a basic human right in a digital world and promotes social inclusion in all nations" (Garner, 2006, p. 3).

The authors find that the essence of literacy has changed in modern times, digital literacy refers to the skills that enable individuals to live, learn and work in a digital world (Pangrazio et. al, 2020).

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