

Foreword

Technoliteracy, Discourse and Social Practice: Frameworks and Applications in the Digital Age by Pullen, Baguley and Gitsaki is about future citizenship and the need to embrace a diversified range of literacies to interact, communicate, learn and survive in the 21st century. To be productive in a modern world it is necessary to prepare multi-literate students by providing educational experiences that embrace linguistic, visual, auditory, gestural and spatial modes of communication.

Previous traditional connotations of literacy focused on text-based reading and the ability of the reader to comprehend, interpret and evaluate the text for understanding and communication. With the advent of more complex media through the internet, three-dimensional environments, mobile technology and the need to socially connect across national borders, literacy in the 21st Century needs to be re-conceptualized. Literacy in the digital age has now become multi-faceted, and its diversified nature means that global citizens require a range of skills to effectively communicate and interact in the modern world. Ubiquitous technology and unprecedented levels of access by privileged users mean that technology is fundamentally reshaping how people interact in the world. There has also been a blurring of our personal and professional lives as we have become network connected 24/7 both wirelessly and socially through our mobile devices as well as being geographically located through our GPS enabled accessories. To be functional and literate in the digital age requires a change in mindset from all community members as there is a widespread need to embrace multi-literacy. This involves embracing a new language that is intertwined with the internet, new media and new thought processes. We all need to become proficient in the new literacies; all levels of education will need to be cognisant of this shift in learning and teaching where students become designers and creators not consumers.

Technology is a fundamental component of new literacies, offering networking, access, rich media and immersive engagement in three dimensional network games that embrace millions of users across the globe. Technology has changed the way we interact, communicate, network and the language that we use. However the way we approach technology is essential for acquiring literacy. Technology skills are insufficient to assist this process and it is no longer relevant to perceive technology as a skill. Our mindset needs to recognize technology as a tool that is shaped and molded to suit the situation. This change in perception needs to occur at both the educator and student levels as teachers need to change their perceptions of technology, develop expertise and technology confidence in order to educate the next generation of student designers. What it means to be educated is fundamentally changing and it is essential that society does not create a wider digital divide between the multi-literate and the mono-literate. Access and equity is still a key concept in relation to internet technologies and there is still inequity of access due to socio-economic status and the infrastructure available within a country.

Chapters in the book cover a diverse range of topics related to technology, literacy, techno-literacy and multi-literacy which is a key concept throughout the book. Social inequality in relation to access to technology and access to innovative education create a digital divide which is eloquently examined

within the book. Users are generating new meaning through their use of new media as the affordances allow new ways of thinking and new ways of expressing ideas and thoughts across the global network of professional and social networks. This book is an essential tool for engaging with the key areas of multi-literacy and the digital age and will provoke wide discussion on communicating as a global citizen in a modern world.

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