

Digital literacies in the EFL

Classroom:

Participatory, multifarious, and
everyday

Jonathon Reinhardt
University of Arizona



my background

- BA in German (Illinois), taught EFL 5 years in Japan, ESL 5 years in US, PhD in Applied Linguistics (Penn State)
- specialize in Computer-Assisted Language Learning, esp. social media & gaming
- <http://arizona.academia.edu/JonathonReinhardt>
- recent publications:
 - Reinhardt, J. & Thorne, S. L. (2019). “Digital literacies as emergent multifarious repertoires”. In Arnold, N. & Ducate, L. (eds.), *Engaging language learners through CALL: From theory and research to informed practice*, 208-239. London: Equinox.
 - Reinhardt, J. (2019). Social media in second and foreign language teaching and learning: Blogs, wikis, and social networking. *Language Teaching*, 52(1), 1-39.
 - Reinhardt, J. (2019). *Gameful Second and Foreign Language Teaching and Learning: Theory, Research, and Practice*. Basingstoke: Palgrave-Macmillan.

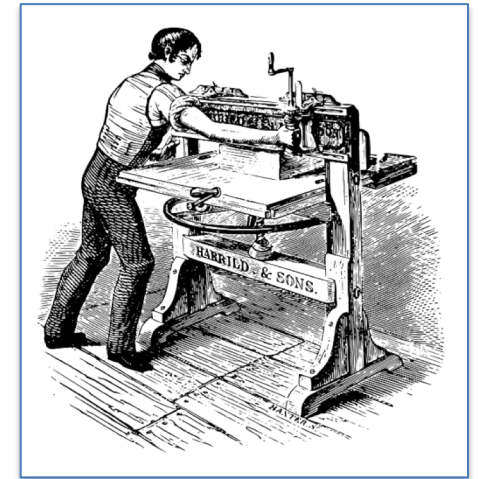
outline

- Literacy
- Traditional digital literacies
- texting, meme, social networking
- A new understanding & definition
- Participatory, multifarious, & everyday
- Learning activities for new computer, information, media, & gaming literacies

Digital literacies, old and new

Part 1

Literacy



(Image of MS Word Toolbar, copyright Microsoft)

(image of Snoopy typing,
copyright C M Schulz &
DHX Media)

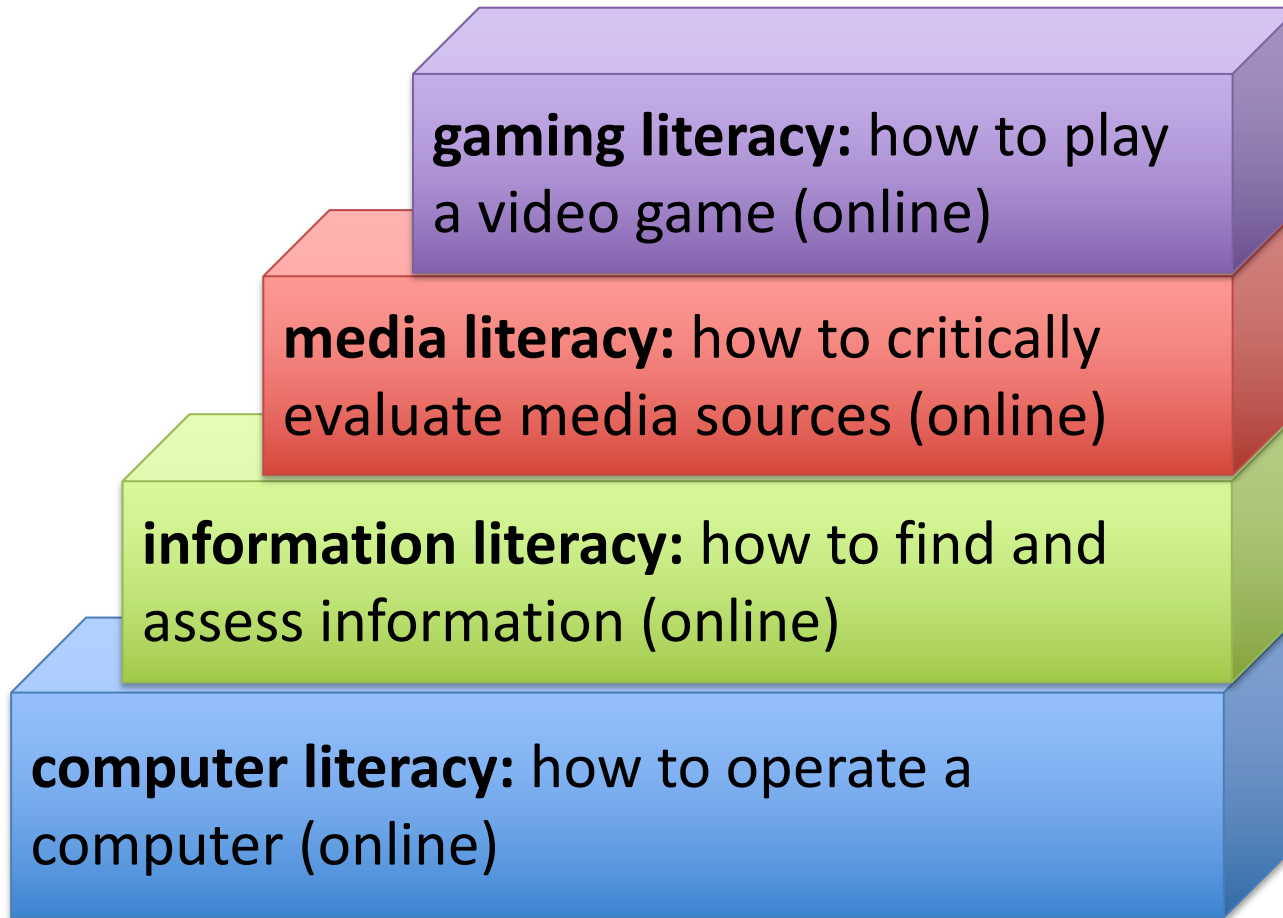


(cartoon called "On the
Internet, Nobody Knows
You're a Dog", copyright
1993 The New Yorker &
Peter Steiner)

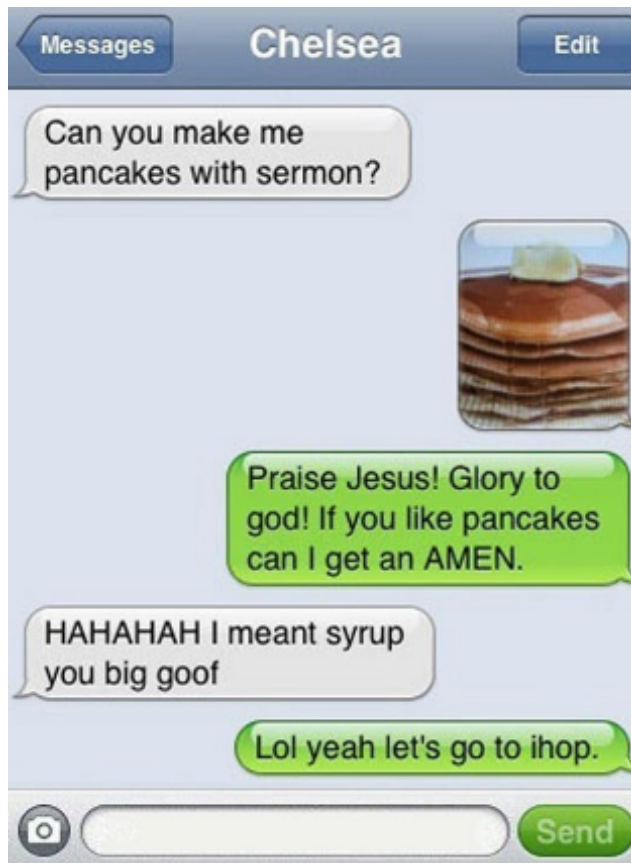
What is literacy?

- Traditionally understood, literacy is the skill and knowledge to decode and encode semiotic systems like written language
- ‘Literate’ can mean ‘knowledgeable about a particular domain’, e.g. cultural, geographical, math, historical, musical, scientific, technological, health, financial, etc.

Traditional digital literacies



What literacies are needed to text?



<https://lefunny.net/top-funniest-conversations-24-pictures-of-conversations/>

Texting literacies



- how to write/type on smartphone keyboard, maybe with thumbs
- using acronyms, abbreviations, texting slang
- how to use emojis, gifs, filters
- how to take turns, maintain coherence, take leave
- how to show politeness, humor, surprise, irony, anger, etc.
- how to take advantage of auto-correct for socio-pragmatic purposes

What literacies are needed to read and write memes?



copyright:

- (2012) Grumpy Cat, Ltd.
- (2001) Warner Bros.
- (2014) gamesbeawesome

Meme literacies

- reading and understanding the words
- recognizing the image portrait as the 'speaker'
- recognizing the genre conventions: lead-in, image, and punchline; font features and placement
- knowing to scroll to read it correctly
- identifying the purpose (social commentary, ridicule, silliness)
- getting the cultural significance and humor
- knowing whether and how to share and/or reply (e.g., like or comment)

What literacies are needed to use Facebook?

The image is a screenshot of a Facebook news feed. At the top, there is a search bar and navigation options for 'Jon', 'Home', 'Create', and notifications. The left sidebar contains navigation links for 'News Feed', 'Messenger', 'Watch', 'Marketplace', and 'Shortcuts'. The main content area shows a 'Create Post' section followed by a post from 'Ben Ruset' in the 'Mid Century Modern Cats' group. The post includes text about a 'red flag' on a dating app and two photos: one of a cat on a sofa and another of a calico cat. The post has 47 reactions and 10 comments. On the right, there are sections for 'Stories' (listing users like Joel Smith and Laura Reinhardt Steele) and 'Your Page' (showing the 'CALICO' page with 17 notifications).

Jon Reinhardt

Search

Jon Home Create

News Feed

Messenger

Watch

Marketplace

Shortcuts

Tucson Yard Sale 20+

SLATSA

Property For Sale i... 19

Pachypodium Planet 20+

Mid Century Moder... 20+

See More...

Explore

Pages

Groups

Oculus

Events

Memories 3

See More...

Create Post

What's on your mind, Jon?

Photo/Video Tag Friends Feeling/Activ...

Ben Ruset ▸ Mid Century Modern Cats 1 hr · 📷

A friend told me about this group after I had mentioned that a woman on a dating app said that it was a "red flag" that I had two cats and mid century modern furniture. Anyway, I figured I'd introduce my two flaggers: the British Shorthair on the Eames ottoman is Kodak and the Exotic Shorthair on my side table is Leica.

47

10 Comments

Stories

Archive · Settings

Add to Your Story

Share a photo, video or write something

Joel Smith 19 hours ago

Laura Reinhardt Steele 12 hours ago

Raúl Alberto Mora 14 hours ago

See More

Your Page

CALICO

Messages

Notifications 17

Publish Photo Live Invite

Likes Views Posts

Chat (10)

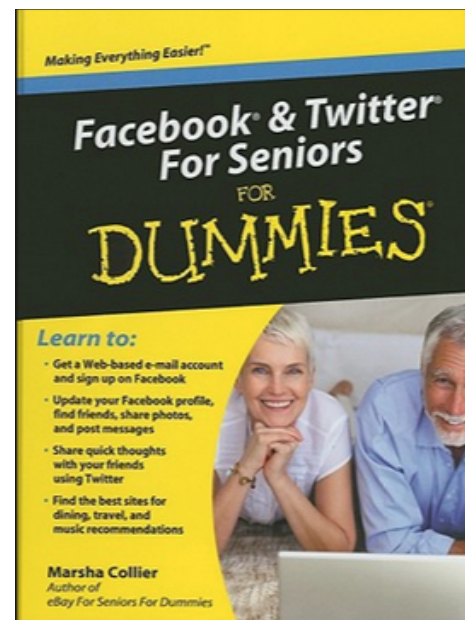
Social networking literacies

- how to curate one's profile and manage one's online presence/image
- how to join and participate in groups
- how/what/when to share, like, etc.
- what is culturally and sociopragmatically (in)appropriate in posts/tweets/grams



How do literacies develop?

- How is literacy traditionally learned?
- How did you learn texting, meme, and social networking literacies?
- How do students learn these 'new' digital literacies in their L1? in their L2?
- To what extent do students need to have them to be a successful expert L2 user?



The image is a composite advertisement for a Facebook class. At the top, there is a smartphone displaying the Facebook login page. To the right of the phone, the words 'SOCIAL MEDIA' are spelled out using wooden letter tiles. Below these elements is a dark blue sign with white text that reads 'JOIN US FOR FACEBOOK CLASS'. To the right of the sign, the date and time '3/23/17 2:00 PM' are displayed. Further right, there is a white box with blue text that says 'Have a Facebook account, but don't know how to use it or want to create one? We can help!'. At the bottom right, another white box with blue text says 'Register by calling the library at 712.722.2138.' The logo for 'Book Center Public Library' is visible in the bottom left corner of the sign.

A new understanding...

- A socio-constructivist view of literacies are that they are **socially recognized practices** which carry meaning in certain symbolic contexts and situations. These vary not only by content but by:
 - Variety (regional, socio-economic class, ethnicity, subculture)
 - Genre (book, academic paper, news, parody, speech, discussion, ceremony, trial)
 - Register (formal, informal, casual, fixed)
 - Domain (home, work, education, religion, government)

What typifies digital literacies?

Jones & Hafner (2012): New digital literacies entail meaning making in contexts of:

- ubiquitous information
- hypertextuality
- multimodality
- interactivity
- polyfocality
- criticality

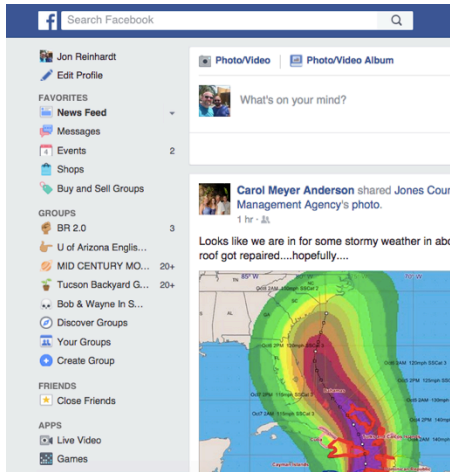
Jones, R. & Hafner, C. (2012).
Understanding Digital Literacies: A
Practical Introduction. Routledge.

A new definition:

- *Literacy is the cognitive ability to decode and encode semiotic systems like written language*
- *Digital literacies are the socio-cognitive practices of using semiotic systems in new digital contexts*

but...

- hasn't language use always been communicative and socio-interactive?
- and isn't writing itself technically a technology? (albeit of course not digital)
- and hasn't literacy always been multimodal?



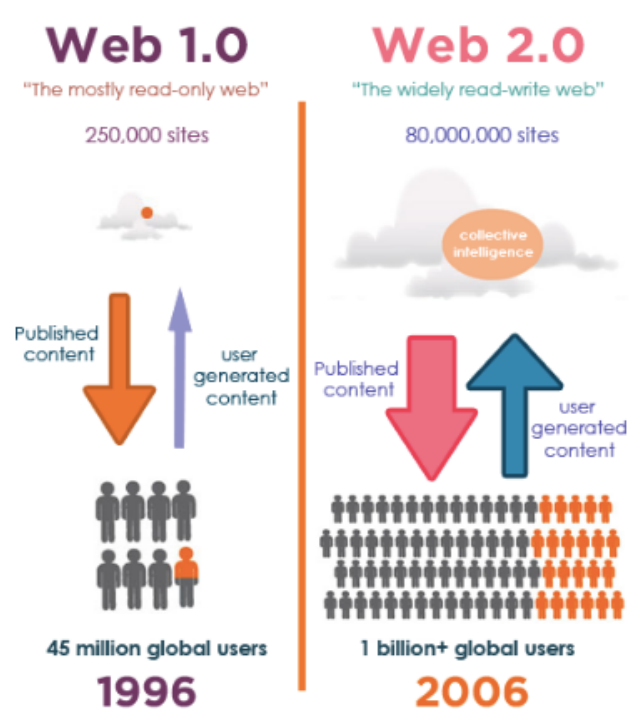
so what is actually new?

Literacy practices have always been social, technology-mediated, and multimodal, but not to the *extent* they are today. They are:

1. not just social, but also **participatory**
2. not just multimodal, but also **multifarious**
(multiple and diverse)
3. not just formal, but also **everyday**

1. participatory

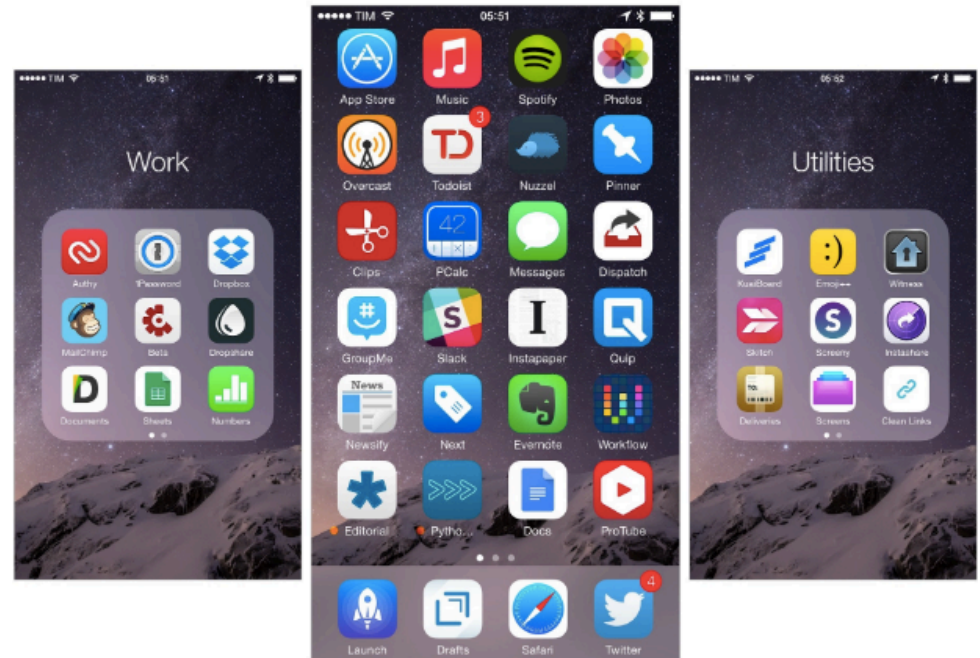
- How much digital content do you consume, use, or re-use? produce? 're-prod-use'?
- How much do you share with other users?
- How have you learned to produce and share content?



copyright (2006) Dion Hinchcliffe

2. multifarious

- How many different computers and devices do you own or use? Have you owned?
- How many different software apps do you have access to? Do you use regularly?
- How have you learned to use them?



3. everyday

- How integrated is personal digital technology in your everyday life? How has it become *habitus* and no longer exceptional?
- How technology-mediatised have everyday activities, like shopping, travel, socializing, and media consumption become for you?
- How have you learned to integrate these tools into your life?



Photo by [rawpixel.com](https://www.rawpixel.com) from [Pexels](https://www.pexels.com)

In sum,

- Digital literacies are the socio-cognitive practices of using semiotic systems in new digital contexts. *They have become increasingly social and participatory, multifarious and customizable, and everyday and informally learned.*
- How can what we do in the L2 classroom reflect this new reality?

Learning activities for new literacies



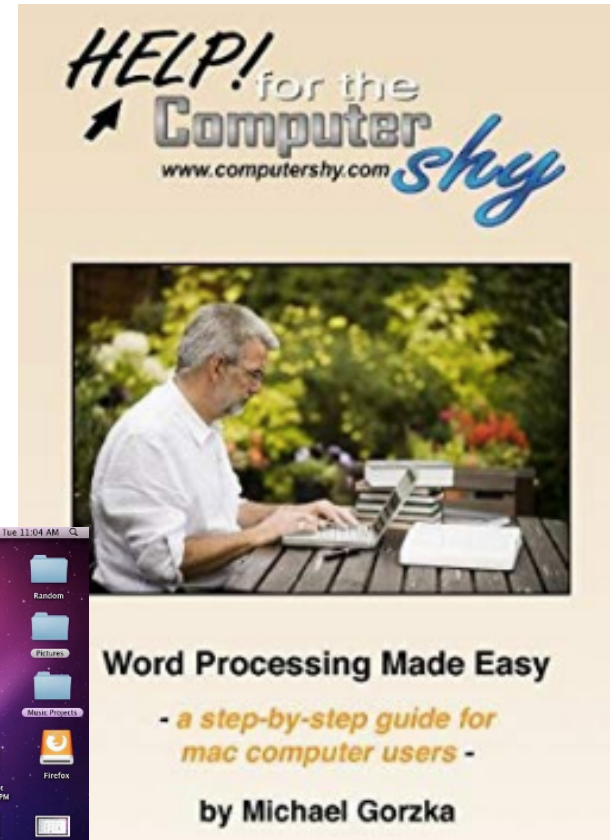
Part 2



Computer literacy



was traditionally the ability to operate a personal computer and basic software, using a network as needed

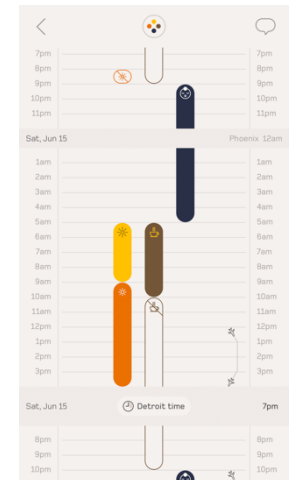
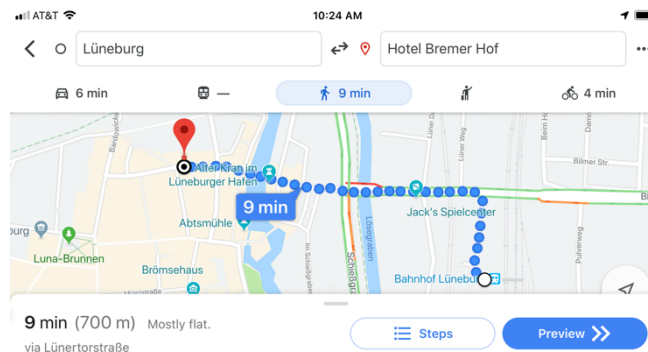


New computer literacies



now include knowledge of:

1. how to use tools to share with others and participate in 'the cloud' (participatory)
2. an ever-expanding array of tools, and how to learn and relearn them (multifarious)
3. how to customize and manage tools used for domestic and everyday purposes (e.g. travel, shopping, management of health, fitness, and time, etc.) (everyday)



Activities for developing new computer literacies



Text stories

- Ss (students) invent text exchanges among characters from popular stories (TV, film, fairy tales, etc.)
- [Hamlet Facebook Newsfeed version](#)
- [textfromdog.tumblr.com](#)

Meme making

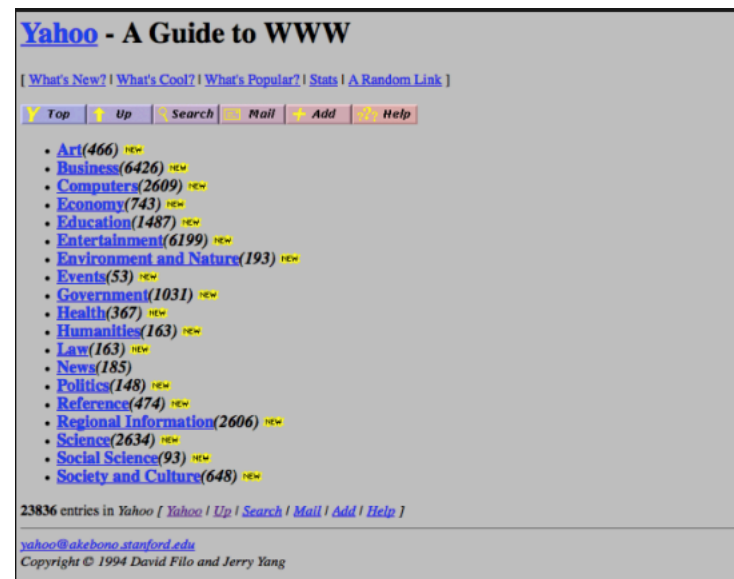
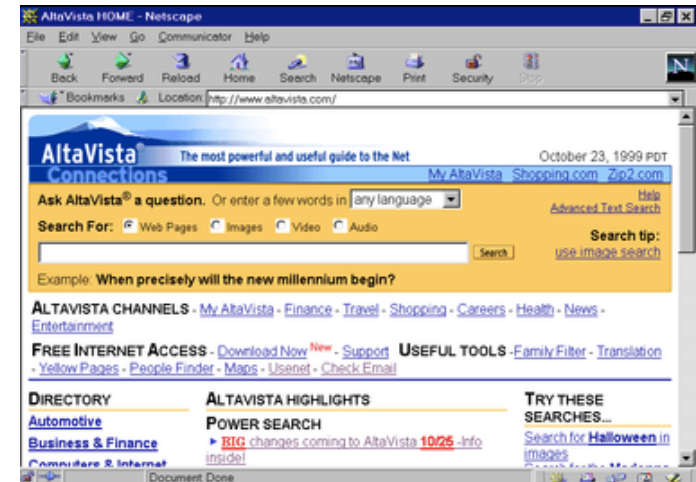
- Ss create memes in response to current events
- <http://imgflip.com/memegenerator>

App collections

- Using a shared evaluation rubric, Ss review and share different apps for L2 study and daily life purposes

Information literacy

was traditionally the ability to find and evaluate information (online)



New information literacies

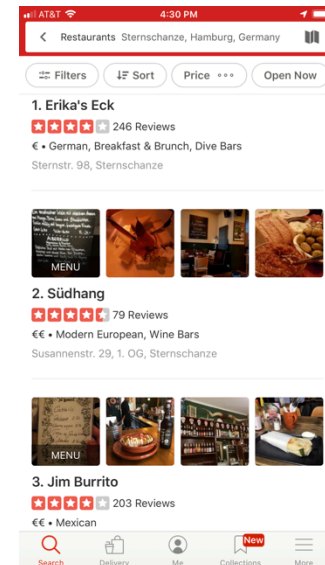


now include knowledge of:

1. one's role and obligations as a 're-prod-user' and sharer of information (participatory)
2. which tools to use for what sorts of searches, and how predictive search algorithms work (multifarious)
3. how to search and evaluate information any time, anywhere (everyday)



is alta vista|
is altavista dead
is alta vista still around
is alta vista safe
what is alta vista
where is alta vista iowa



Activities for developing new information literacies



Web scavenger hunts:

- Ss search for answers to list of 10-12 basic trivia Qs using different engines, practicing search parameters, with different devices
- Ss analyze and compare results and histories/pathways
- can be gamified as competitions/for points

Web quests:

- Ss come up with Qs based on problems/topics, search for answers, leading to new Qs
- can include posting in groups for expert/social assistance
- may include final reports/presentations

Online translator & dictionary activities:

- Ss use and compare different translators & dictionaries, both online and print by looking up same word/phrase
- Ss do reverse translation activities (L1->L2->L1) with song lyrics, poems, stories, etc.

Media literacy



was traditionally the critical awareness of media in society and ideological origins of media discourses

- Bandwagon
- Testimonial
- Snob Appeal
- Glittering Generalities
- Overgeneralization
- Name Calling
- Stereotype

<http://www.nytimes.com>

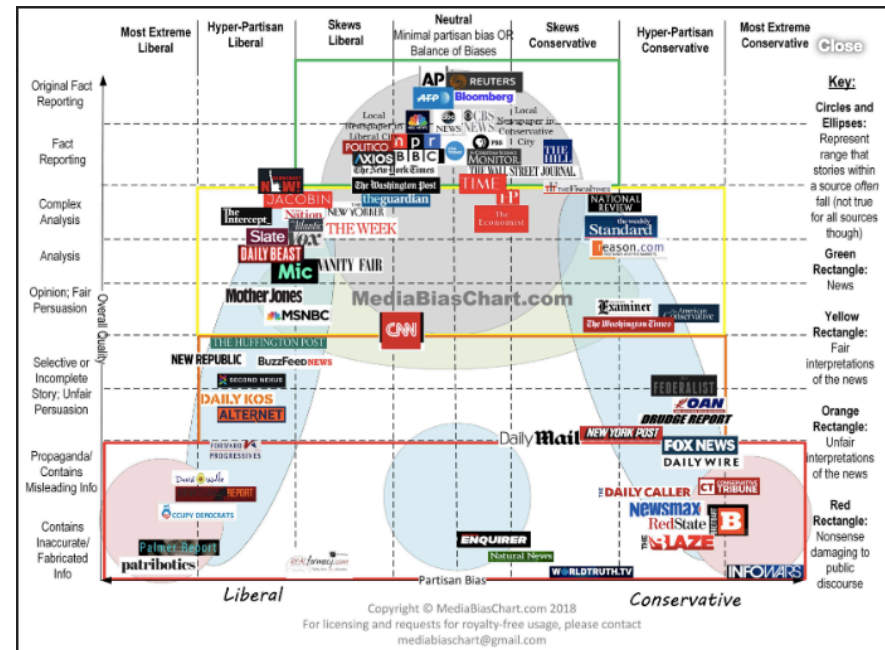
<http://www.foxnews.com>

New (social) media literacies



now include knowledge of:

1. how user-built social networks and profiles serve social media corporate interests (participatory)
2. how different news organizations have biases and are associated with particular tools and media (multifarious)
3. how media agents, for various purposes, may track everyday use through cookies, shares, likes, etc. (everyday)



Media Bias Chart 4.0

<https://www.adfontesmedia.com>

Activities for developing new media literacies



Online ad & post analyses

- Ss collect online and social media ads or posts for a product, service, or campaign, and analyze them for sales and propaganda techniques
- Based on analyses, Ss create ads for fake products and ‘sell’ them to classmates

Digital storytelling

- Ss design and create multimedia stories about various topics – e.g. family members, places, events – following traditional narrative outlines, taking a variety of rhetorical perspectives.

Fake news reports

- Ss choose benign topics and create fake news stories about them, following satirical news structures (e.g. <http://www.theonion.com>)
- Ss discuss and debunk the reports by searching for and presenting counter-evidence.
- <http://factitious.augamestudio.com>

Gaming literacy



- was traditionally the ability to learn, play, and win a digital game, applying strategies and utilizing game-external resources



What related literacies may develop through gaming?



- **play** – how to use play to solve problems and be creative
- **systems/design** – how systems are organized and designed
- **computational** – how systems are procedurally interrelated
- **multimodal** – how text, image, sound, and movement are representational
- **performance** – how identities are enacted
- **emotional** – how to express feelings and empathize
- **socio-interactional** – how to interact with others

New gaming literacies



now include knowledge of:

1. how to play in multiplayer games – e.g. MOBAs, team co-op – as well as how to participate in Twitch-streaming, eSports, and fan communities (participatory)
2. much greater variety of games, genres, and sub-genres (multifarious)
3. how to play seriously and casually, and to manage playtime (everyday)

<http://www.twitch.tv>

<http://www.youtube.com/user/InsideGaming>

Activities for developing new gaming literacies



Game journals:

- In groups or individually, Ss record and reflect on what they do in a game, focusing on game rules and narratives (stories)

Game fan fiction:

- Ss tell and expand stories of game characters in different genres (e.g. autobiography, fiction, play (drama), news report) and media (print, presentation, video)

Game evaluations:

- Ss evaluate games based on pre-determined criteria (e.g. challenge, engagement, graphics, pacing, story, L2 learning potential, etc.), presenting findings in report/to class

Game guide:

- Ss create a guide (e.g. short videos) to using a game for L2 learning purposes

In sum,

- New digital literacies are participatory, multifarious, and everyday now more than ever, which compels us to reconceptualize ‘traditional’ computer, information, media, and gaming literacies.
- Traditional learning activities like web quests, advertisement analyses, storytelling, and journaling can be adapted to new realities by considering these qualities.
- Learning activities that naturally contextualize social participation in digital tool use, that address the massive diversity of tools available, and that acknowledge their informal, everyday qualities are well-suited to develop these new literacies.
- The purpose of formal literacies education is to raise critical awareness of the familiar.

For any medium has the power of imposing its own assumptions on the unwary. Prediction and control consist in avoiding this subliminal state of Narcissus trance.

Marshall McLuhan (1964)

Understanding Media: The Medium is the Message, p. 30

Thank you! Dankeschön!

jonrein@email.arizona.edu