

# **Developing digital competencies: A reflection on how the Professional Development Framework can support the development of digital competencies for Library staff.**

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## **Abstract**

This chapter explores how the National Forum's Professional Development Framework (PDF) has challenged and informed my assumptions about continuing professional development, most specifically the arena of developing digital competencies. Offering a qualitative interpretation, I draw on my personal reflections and learning from participation in the L2L project using a reflective practice approach. This is based on my understanding and interpretation of the framework. Inherent in this analysis is an examination of how engaging with the framework and more specifically Domain 5: Personal and Professional Digital Capacity in Teaching and Learning, has allowed me to further develop my personal proficiency/knowledge in digital competencies thus supporting my role in Teaching and Learning.

## **Introduction**

Following a brief literature review and background information about the National Forum and the L2L project, this chapter explores the following key areas:

- Challenges posed by rapid changes in technology and how these changes are reconceptualising the role of library staff who teach
- The digital skills and competencies required for LIS professionals in order to remain current and viable in an evolving education landscape

- The nature of the Professional Development Framework (PDF) and its role in supporting the acquisition of digital competencies – specifically looking at Domain 5.
- A personal reflection on how the framework has impacted my perceptions about professional development and the development of digital competencies

## **Literature Review**

It is well documented in the literature that recent rapid technological developments have impacted on the full spectrum of library services and practices with the concept of the “digital library” or “hybrid library” becoming synonymous with this transformation (Chowdhury, 2002; Zhou, 2005, Nguyen & Chowdhury, 2013). All aspects of library services/practices including information literacy training, are being redefined to reflect these ever changing digital/technological developments. Exciting new roles are emerging for library staff that will have implications for the sort of digital competencies that will be required.

Ferrari (2012, pp. 3, 4) defines digital competencies as “the set of knowledge, skills, attitudes (thus including abilities, strategies, values and awareness) that are required when using ICT and digital media to perform tasks; solve problems; communicate; manage information; collaborate...” and “behave in an ethical and responsible way”. Digital competencies required by library staff include digital communication skills, as much of our current communication with our users is now digitally mediated (Cooper, 2014). From the way libraries communicate with their users, their role as teachers/educators, to the delivery of new services such as institutional repositories, new digital skills/competencies are required by library staff (Zhou, 2005; Choi & Rasmussen, 2009; Gregersen, 2013).

The concepts of the “blended librarian” (Bell & Shank, 2004; Shank & Bell, 2011) or the “embedded librarian” have gained traction in the literature (Dewey, 2004; Dugan, 2008; Edwards & Black, 2012; Freiburger & Kramer, 2009; Kesselman & Watstein, 2009; Shumaker & Talley, 2009; York & Vance, 2009). Blended librarianship emphasises

the additional digital skills now required by academic librarians and their ability to utilise technology in the teaching and learning process (Bell & Shank, 2004). Whereas, the benefits of adopting an “embedded approach” include increased collaboration between librarians and faculty (Dewey, 2004), meeting the needs of increasingly diverse cohorts of online users and increased promotion of information literacy programmes (Vassilakaki & Moniarou-Papconstantinou, 2015). The levels of embeddedness can be linked to three tiers of participation (Allen, 2017; Sylvain, Mofford & Rile, 2011; York & Vance, 2009):

- Level 1: simply providing contact information or links to the library webpages
- Level 2: creating online tools for specific tutorials or free-standing information literacy tutorials
- Level 3: collaborating with Faculty to create/design fully embedded library modules on courses which may involve assessment grading

Utilising the “blended” or “embedded” approach requires library staff to create and design online tutorials, reusable learning objects (RLOs) and other forms of online material to support the teaching process. This in turn, offers library staff exciting professional development opportunities to develop digital creative skills.

These concepts underline a thread in the literature that stresses the need for LIS professionals to develop their expertise and competencies in the use of new educational technologies in order to take a partnership role in the teaching and learning process (Biddiscombe, 2002; Chitty & McRostie, 2016; Corral, 2015; Corral & Keates, 2011; Farber, 1999; Law, 2011; Perez, 2013; Searle, Wolski, Simons & Richardson, 2015, Stripling, 2010). There is a real need for library staff to be able to articulate and authenticate a desire to be appreciated as real stakeholders in the Teaching and Learning process (Law, 2011). We need to be able to demonstrate to our respective institutions how we can add value to the Teaching and Learning process, so as to remain current and relevant. In determining the future direction and delivery of services, libraries need to work within their institutional strategic framework and as Law (2011, p 273) argues cultivate “a better

understanding of the value we add to the institutional mission". This identification process will aid us in mapping out the skills/competencies required by library staff. Developing digital skills in areas deemed to be of value in underpinning our teaching practice that are sustainable going forward is vital in revitalising and reimagining our services in this ever changing environment.

Technology now permeates the delivery of teaching and learning which is reflected in how the end user experiences and interacts with the delivery and teaching of courses. The growing proliferation of learning management systems (LMS) (also known as content management systems (CMS) or virtual learning environments (VLE)), online courses such as Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), and social media communication platforms such as Twitter and Facebook have impacted on how libraries deliver online "embedded" services as part of the teaching and learning process (Barnes, 2013; Becker, 2010; Shank & Bell, 2011).

Similarly, the advent of new digital technologies and advanced communication networks have impacted on the delivery of research services. Exciting new possibilities and areas of expertise have opened up for library staff in this area such as marketing and establishing Institutional Repositories, implementing access rights and preserving digital content (Cassella & Morando, 2012; ARL, 2009). There is now scope for LIS staff to take a leadership role in helping researchers and institutions manage/navigate an increasingly complicated digital research eco-system (Corrall, Kennan & Salo, 2013, Mallikarjun & Kumar, 2015). Research data management including maximising research impact, improving the visibility of research outputs, effectively communicating and promoting research are key areas where LIS staff can demonstrate value-adding expertise and knowledge, thus increasing their perceived "institutional" value.

It could be argued that becoming a proficient operator in an increasingly complex research/academic eco-system is now a core competency with new roles emerging for library staff. New roles identified for LIS staff emphasise the technological knowledge required with increasing emphasis on LIS staff as "technology specialists" or "technology integration leaders" (Hew & Brush, 2007).

Underlining the emergence of this new “digital space” for LIS staff is the fundamental need to develop a sophisticated awareness of various aspects of the nature of digital identity, data and information, and the ethical implications/digital ethos of this new digital landscape (Fogleman, Niedbala & Bedell, 2013; Fortier & Burkell, 2015; Greenland, 2013). In order to fully occupy the role of digital research experts, it is imperative that LIS staff continuously adapt their thinking to achieve this. Matarazzo and Pearlstein (2017, p 5) argue that adapting a “digital thought process” (as outlined by Meffert and Swaminathan, *Digital@Scale: The Playbook You Need to Transform Your Company*, 2017) presents new opportunities for sustainability, developing new digital skills and job enrichment. Adapting this “digital thought process” will facilitate strategic thinking about your skill set rather than letting yourself become defined by a job description.

Against this background, I would suggest that pertinent core areas of expertise now required by library staff who teach in this environment include:

- Actively engaging in delivering relevant and current Information Literacy instruction using relevant tools and technologies – the “blended” or “embedded” librarian concept
- Partnering effectively in the teaching and learning process through acquiring the necessary digital knowledge and skills to successfully navigate the research/academic environment
- Becoming partners in the management of research – essentially guiding our Faculties in the management of their research output, data management and digital identities
- Developing sophisticated digital communication skills – web authoring skills
- Developing an understanding and awareness of the nature of online identity, data and information and the ethical implications of this new digital landscape

### **Professional Development Frameworks**

In light of these new emerging roles, how can library staff begin to develop a growth mind set to develop these new skills? Professional

development frameworks can be useful tools in providing a set of guidelines to pursue relevant CPD activities/practice. They also provide the opportunity to articulate the values of the “self” or a personal philosophy which will inform practice on a practical level. These frameworks can provide a blueprint for our personal and professional action in the world. In terms of developing digital capabilities, there are a number of higher education frameworks which describe the digital skills/competencies required by staff working in an academic environment. Examples include JISC’s (2015) Digital Capability Framework and the All Aboard National Digital Skills Framework for Irish Education (Dore, Geraghty & O’Riordan, 2015) which builds on existing digital skills frameworks.

Similarly, a number of LIS sectoral professional associations have issued competency statements/frameworks. These essentially outline the core competences of librarianship and the specialised knowledge now required by graduates in the field. A common thread running through these frameworks is the identification of technological knowledge and skills as a core competence. The American Library Association (ALA) for example, emphasises the necessity of possessing “the principles and techniques necessary to identify and analyse emerging technologies and innovations to implement relevant technological improvements” in its 2009 Core Competences of Librarianship. Similarly LITA’S Guide: Core Technology Competencies for Librarians and Library Staff (2009) outlines a method for identifying desirable core technology skills. In 2011, SCONUL updated its seven pillars of information literacy framework to incorporate and reflect the growing importance of digital literacies.

### **National Forum Professional Development Framework**

The professional development framework that this chapter is concerned with is the Irish National Professional Development Framework (2016), for all staff who teach in Irish higher education. This framework was articulated by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education. This inclusive framework provides guidance for the professional development (PD) of individuals and gives direction to other interested stakeholders such as respective institutions, for planning, developing and engaging in professional development activities (National Forum, 2016). What is interesting about this

framework is that it adopts an all-inclusive approach in terms of its adaptability for all staff involved in the teaching process, from academic staff to research staff to library staff. This approach is vital in developing a mind-set that library staff are valued as real stakeholders in the teaching and learning process.

The framework revolves around five domains, each subdivided into a number of elements. A key concept inherent within the framework is the idea of “the self” and how the personal identity can transform into the professional identity. This can be viewed as a transformational process that is constantly evolving and changing to reflect our changing views, values and emotions. The emphasis of the framework on the individual, is reflected by placing “the self” (Domain 1: Personal Development) at the centre of all PD activity. Each of the remaining four domains reflects various aspects of professional development such as Domain 2: Professional identity, values and development in Teaching and Learning or Domain 3: Professional Communication and Dialogue in Teaching and Learning. Domain 5 is concerned with developing personal and professional digital capacity in Teaching and Learning. This domain focuses on the development of digital capacity and the application of digital skills to professional practice and is underpinned by the National Digital Skills Framework for Education.

### **L2L Project**

L2L is a project funded by the National Forum for Teaching and Learning in Ireland that aims to explore its Framework for Professional Development through the lens of library staff. Through this, the aim is to provide a sustainable structure to assist library staff when engaging with PD in an ever-evolving profession. L2L is a two year collaborative project based in Ireland led by Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT), Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) and Institute of Technology Carlow (ITC).

The L2L project group has aimed to engage with the Framework on various levels ranging from the personal to the professional. A central question at the core of the project is the nature of a teacher librarian’s professional identity. Too often, library staff operate in an environmental vacuum of uncertainty and ambiguity in defining their role within an institution. The role of library staff in academic institutions has evolved

to include more teaching which for many who do not possess formal teaching training induces a certain level of teaching anxiety. Davis (2007) noted that for many teacher librarians feelings of anxiety were common. This raises the question of how adequately prepared we feel we are for teaching roles and how can the professional development framework help us to feel more assured in that teaching and learning space?

Some of the questions the project has considered include: Are we teachers or librarians or are we teacher-librarians? Do we populate the practitioner space or the academic space or a “third” space? (Whitchurch, 2008). Do we possess the self-assuredness and confidence to take ownership of a space and make it our own? If not, how do we develop this confidence and ability to craft our own identity and reconceptualise our role within our institutions?

In terms of developing our digital skills and competences, how do we craft our role within our “institutional” contexts so as to add value and currency?

## **My Background**

In offering my reflections on how the framework has impacted my thinking around professional development and digital competencies, it is important to understand my educational background, the institutional context that I operate in and the stage of career that I am at. I am employed as an Assistant Librarian at the Institute of Technology Carlow (ITC), which is a progressive Institute of Technology in the south east of Ireland with a student population of approximately 8000 students (both full and part-time students). The ITC offers a broad range of courses ranging from Business and Humanities to Science and Engineering. The mission of ITC is to engage, learn, challenge and innovate, which is articulated through an educational environment and context where learners pursue studies in higher education and research up to doctoral level.

The role that I fulfil is as Liaison Librarian to the Faculty of Business and Humanities. This role encompasses the usual functions of the subject liaison librarian role such as providing Information Literacy training, liaising with business and humanities academics and students and the more daily transactional functions such as



collection development, cataloguing, classification, research/reference services and so on. I have been in this position since 2004, so I would consider myself to be a mid-career LIS professional. The ITC has grown considerably since 2004, with a greater number of courses, which has impacted my role in terms of having to extend my reach to include larger numbers of students. Due to the large number of students in the Faculty of Business and Humanities, a main focus of my role is the provision of information literacy training across the spectrum from first year students right up to researchers and doctoral students. I do and have always considered myself to be a “teacher-librarian”. My educational qualifications include a primary BA degree in English and History, a Higher Diploma in Library and Information Studies and a Higher Diploma in Education. The Higher Diploma in Education is a teacher training qualification. In 2012, I completed a Master’s in Business in the Institute of Technology Carlow.

### **Reflections on interacting with the framework**

In the early stages of my career I did feel a certain anxiety about fulfilling the teaching aspect of my role. The feelings of anxiety amongst librarians about teaching that Davis (2007) has noted, is something that I feel is real and very tangible on the ground, especially for early career LIS staff. It is only with experience that I have grown comfortable in the role of teacher. Whilst I had the pedagogical teacher training foundation through my qualifications, I operated in a LIS profession vacuum of uncertainty and lack of confidence in our abilities and identity as teachers.

Prior to getting involved in the L2L project, I had no knowledge of the National Forum’s Professional Development Framework. Through the L2L project I have thoroughly engaged with the Framework in a way that has impacted on my ingrained thinking and challenged assumptions that I had never confronted fully in a personally constructive manner. It was enlightening to see the flexible and inclusive nature of the framework in terms of its aim to be interpreted and adapted for many different cohorts of teaching staff including library staff. It is important to the Irish LIS profession that efforts at a national level are being made to include and recognise the teaching role that library staff undertake on a daily

basis and align more within the broader academic context, which is the essence of what the L2L project is about. A certain amount of discussion within the project focused on the language used within the framework and the level of applicability and correlation there is to the LIS teaching arena.

A key question considered is whether we as teaching library staff need our own professional development framework reflective of our terminology and LIS context. My interpretation of the framework is that whilst some of the domain elements may not be as applicable to the teaching we undertake, it is important that we align ourselves as closely as possible within the wider academic sphere. This may involve a process of reconceptualising our role as teachers in order to move from the practitioner space into the teaching space. This is essential if we want to be recognised as fully fledged partners in the teaching and learning process.

On a macro level, I applaud the placing of “the self” at the heart of the framework. This personal development domain emphasises the unique set of personal values, emotions and perspectives that each individual brings to their teaching, even if we are not consciously aware of this. An incredibly useful exercise that I engaged in was articulating and formulating my own teaching philosophy statement. This concept is well documented in the educational literature (Alexander et al., 2012; Caukin & Brinthaupt, 2017; Hegarty & Silliman, 2016; Janelle, 2009) but again is something that is not pervasive amongst our profession. The drafting of this philosophy statement allowed me to consciously examine the values, assumptions and perspectives I bring to the classroom and how this impacts on the students I teach.

Articulating my core values of honesty, respect, partnership, integrity, relevancy and collaboration has rejuvenated my deep commitment to providing the best teaching experience possible for my students. It has reaffirmed my view of the teaching process as a reciprocal one where I can continuously learn as well. The reflective exercise of formulating and articulating a personal teaching philosophy statement is extremely liberating in the sense of attempting to understand our personal action in the world. This

development of a growth mind-set is important in understanding personal context but also how we fit into our institutional context. It is very much a transformational process where my personal identity will shape and inform my professional identity. An interesting process going forward for the ITC Library is the articulation of a library teaching philosophy, which will be informed by relevant personal teaching philosophies; again an extension of the process of the personal identity shaping the professional identity.

Drafting a philosophy statement has also allowed me to evaluate how I contribute to institutional strategic goals and mission. It has afforded me the opportunity to understand the important role I play in helping students develop critical thinking/information literacy skills, which feeds into the institutional strategic goal of students attaining a set of desirable graduate attributes. A stated goal in the Institute of Technology Carlow's Strategic Plan 2014-2018 is the "optimisation of the learner experience to support the development of graduate attributes that meet the needs of learners and of modern society". (Institute of Technology Carlow's Strategic Plan 2014-2018, p.13).

This ambition will be achieved through promoting research-informed innovative learning that enhances learner engagement and achievement and by supporting excellence in learning and teaching through staff development. A particular focus of this element is on increasing staff participation in continuous professional development programmes. Undoubtedly, the continuing professional development ethos running through the framework is a crucial support to all staff who teach as it essentially provides a roadmap to assess CPD needs through exploration of its five domains. Through my engagement with the different Domains, I am much more aware of my CPD needs going forward and realise the importance of revisiting my teaching philosophy statement as various junctures due to its evolutionary nature.

### **Digital Capacity (Domain 5)**

In engaging with Domain 5: Personal and Professional Digital Capacity in Teaching and Learning it was useful to extend the reach of my

teaching philosophy statement through the formulation of a digital philosophy statement (see Appendix). This Domain emphasises the importance of personal and professional digital capacity and the application of digital skills and knowledge to professional practice, and assumes a holistic approach based on the National Digital Skills Framework for Education (All Aboard, 2015, another project funded by the National Forum) in terms of developing personal confidence in digital skills/competences.

To truly engage with Domain 5, I felt it was imperative to chart my digital progress to date by analysing my own evidence and experience, thus allowing me to create my own individual digital roadmap in terms of future CPD needs; in effect, to undertake a personal needs analysis and use this as a tool to take ownership of my digital development in a sustainable manner. This approach of encouraging individuals to recognise the importance of self-evaluation informed by data and evidence is supported by the Framework.

This drafting of a digital philosophy statement was useful in cultivating the “digital thought process” advocated by Matarazzo and Pearlstein (2017, p. 5). The aim of this statement as an extension of my broader teaching philosophy statement is twofold:

- Provide reflection on my perceptions and understanding of digital competencies and their place in my role as a teacher librarian
- Endeavour to map my current level of digital competencies against Domain 5 of the PDF and more specifically the All Aboard Digital Skills Metro Map (All Aboard, 2015; Dore, Geraghty & O’Riordan, 2015), which underpins Domain 5.

### **My perceptions and understanding of digital competencies**

Undoubtedly, my role as a teacher librarian has been impacted and continues to be impacted by the relentless onslaught of new technological innovations and developments. In the early stages of my career, it was entirely sufficient to have a good level of IT skills in various software programmes such as the Microsoft suite. These one




dimensional “ICT skills” were adequate in supporting my teaching in various ways such as compiling a Powerpoint presentation to the production of paper Library guides etc. Technological innovations within the educational context have provided additional opportunities for the ITC Carlow Library to extend the reach of our services. For example, the Blackboard LMS environment has provided an additional library space to extend our reach to students and provide an online communication platform to support our teaching role within the Institute.




Through my interaction with the Professional Development Framework, I now understand that my perception and understanding of the digital skills arena has evolved to incorporate a wider appreciation of their importance. Moving from possessing one dimensional “ICT skills” I have endeavoured to develop digital competencies which reflect as Ferrari (2012) states a set of knowledge, skills, abilities, strategies and awareness that is required when using ICT an digital media to perform tasks, solve problems, communicate, manage information, collaborate, create and share. As a LIS professional working in an academic library, there is a constant evolution of our library services in response to technological and student/societal needs.

This constant digital evolution of library services is a key driver in determining the digital competencies personally required to deliver these new types of services. The process of attaining professional and personal digital proficiency is very much a reciprocal one, with the acquisition of personal digital competencies influencing the application of these skills and knowledge to professional practice.

### **Mapping my digital competencies**

In cultivating the “digital thought process” to analyse my current level of digital competencies and my future professional development needs, I found it useful to map my personal digital capacity as influenced by ITC Library’s professional digital capacity (see Figure 1 below):

<b>Professional Capacity</b>		<b>Personal Capacity</b>
<p><u>Element 5.1: Teach and Learn</u> ITC Library displays high awareness in some of the areas identified under this element such as referencing, avoiding plagiarism, producing content, classroom techniques.</p>		<p>My teaching requires a high awareness and knowledge of key areas such as referencing, avoiding plagiarism, referencing software etc. Through my interaction with project work, would have an awareness of digital badges, changing classroom techniques etc.</p>
<p><u>Element 5.2: Tools &amp; Technologies</u> ITC Library utilises varied tools and technologies to support personal learning, teaching and scholarship. Some of these tools include online databases, e-book platforms, mobile technologies (library website available as mobile version), search engines, federated search engine tool (EDS), proposed institutional repository, data storage.</p>		<p>My teaching involves the demonstration of various tools and technologies which have allowed me to develop a good knowledge of relevant databases, jargon, online navigation, various digital platforms such as our e-book and federated search engine platform.</p>
<p><u>Element 5.3: Communication &amp; Collaboration</u> ITC Library has harnessed the application of technologies for effective communication with our students, staff and local and national communities. The use of email, various social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook and the use of the LMS system (Blackboard) have allowed us to communicate and enhance collaboration with our learning communities.</p>		<p>The use of social media platforms has increased my proficiency in web authoring skills (email, social media). My increased use of LMS to disseminate library guides/ relevant information.</p>

Professional Capacity		Personal Capacity
<p><u>Element 5.4: Create &amp; Innovate</u>            Digital capacity has also been developed through the creation of RLOs (Reusable Learning Objects) to cater to our Lifelong Learning and Defence Forces student cohorts. Working through a national Digital Champions project (<a href="http://www.digitalchampions.ie/">http://www.digitalchampions.ie/</a>), the Library team involved created a digital toolkit designed to enhance the digital learning experience of Defence Force students when finding, using and managing information during their academic studies.</p>		<p>My involvement in this project has developed my ability to create digital learning tools using software such as Articulate, screencasting (Screencast-o-Matic) animation tools such as Powtoon and blog.</p>
<p><u>Element 5.5: Find and Use</u>            Through our Information Literacy training, ITC Library incorporates elements of this strand including search techniques, critical evaluation, keyword searching, sources, search engines, citations, publication types, scholarship, both in the classroom and through our digital toolkit.</p>		<p>These are regular elements of my teaching practice in the classroom and through my creation of digital learning tools such as RLOs.</p>
<p><u>Element 5.6: Identity &amp; Well-Being</u>            Interacting with Element 5.4 has stimulated our thinking and consideration of our stake-holders wellbeing and the complex nature of online identity, ethical considerations of online data and information, privacy concerns (especially with the advent of GDPR) and the correct use of sharing and using digital images.</p>		<p>Stimulated my thinking about my own digital footprint in terms of how I use social media platforms, email and other communication tools and the ethical implications involved.</p>

**Figure 1: Professional digital capacity impacting personal digital capacity based on the various elements of Domain 5**

This mapping exercise provides a comprehensive snapshot of where I am now in terms of acquiring that digital set of knowledge, skills, abilities and awareness that Ferrari (2012) refers to. Element 5.4: Create and

Innovate can be related to the “blended” or “embedded librarian” concept discussed earlier. According to Allen (2017) and York and Vance’s (2009) analysis, ITC Library is currently placed at the Level 2 tier of embedded participation. This level is concerned with creating online tools for specific tutorials or free-standing information literacy tutorials. The next logical step would be to move to the Level 3 tier of participation or adopting a more “blended approach”. This tier is concerned with collaboration with Faculty to create/design fully embedded modules on courses which may involve assessment grading. Overall, I have a sense that I score more highly in certain elements such as Element 5.5: Find and Use than I do on others. This may be reflective of the LIS teaching space that I occupy, which merits a more natural fit for certain elements. It may also be reflective of the current digital capacity of the ITC Library service and how my set of skills feed into this.

### **Future CPD needs**

Undoubtedly, in a personal capacity this critical analysis highlights certain digital deficit areas. Whilst I have developed a certain level of digital capacity, it is imperative that I continuously cultivate these skills further. In particular, further upskilling is required around Elements 5.4: Create and Innovate and 5.6: Identity and Wellbeing due to the constantly evolving nature of these areas. A future consideration could be the pursuit of digital badges relevant to these areas.

### **Conclusion**

My interaction with the PD framework has challenged and modified my thinking as regards the acquisition of digital competencies. The articulation of a digital philosophy statement has evolved my “mind-set” to incorporate a “digital thought process”. This has facilitated a shift towards thinking that is more conducive to incorporating strategic thinking, thus allowing my thinking to focus on my current/future CPD needs and how my role supports the institutional mission of the Institute of Technology Carlow. The PDF can support me in this through the provision of a roadmap that I can benchmark against.

My interaction with the PDF has also created awareness of how my personal digital capacity is very much influenced by my environmental digital capacity. Concepts that have emerged in the literature review such as the “embedded” or “blended” librarian approach are very much coming to the fore within my local library environment. Undoubtedly, the



adoption of these concepts will impact on the digital skills that I need to deliver on these. Similarly, engagement with the PDF has created awareness around digital library issues, such as the nature of online identity, data and information, and the ethical implications of this new and constantly evolving digital landscape.

Ongoing engagement with the PDF will undoubtedly assist me in continuing to develop my skill set in response to my institutional needs. Questions which the PDF will continue to highlight for me are how my institution can support me in the pursuit of my future CPD needs and how can the LIS sector support LIS professionals going forward?

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## **Appendix to chapter**

### **Digital Philosophy Statement**

Aim:

As a teacher librarian, the aim of this digital philosophy statement is an attempt to articulate and recognise how new technological developments have impacted/are impacting my teaching. It is imperative for me to respond to these ever changing dynamics so as to provide a positive, progressive learning experience for my students. The overriding aim of this statement is to clarify and plan for my CPD digital needs going forward.

Beliefs:

I believe that adapting/developing new digital capacities into my teaching practice will provide currency and relevancy in the delivery of my teaching thus improving the learning experience for my students. I believe the development of my digital competencies will enable me to design and create digital subject support material that will act as a scaffold for my classroom teaching.

A core tenet of my overall teaching philosophy is actively involving students in the process of learning and knowledge construction. I believe it is crucial that I endeavour to develop my digital competencies to support this approach and accommodate emerging student digital literacies.

Values:

- Relevancy - The core values that inform and underline my development of digital capabilities include relevancy and currency. I strive to provide a fresh teaching and learning experience for my students that is reflective of new technologies.
- Extended reach - I value and recognise the opportunities that new

technological developments offer me in extending my sphere of influence to more diverse student cohorts such as Distance Learners through the utilisation of varied platforms and online spaces such as the LMS online environment.

- Collaboration – I place a high value on collaboration with my academic peers in providing appropriate digital subject support such as the design and creation of relevant RLOs, online training tutorials etc.
- Reflection – my ability to reflectively examine my development of digital capacities is key in determining the use and effectiveness of these in delivering and supporting my teaching.
- Ethical awareness – I respect and understand the ethical implications of the digital arena including privacy issues/data protection, the online sharing of information and my digital footprint/identity.

Goals:

- To develop my personal confidence in the application of digital skills and knowledge to my professional teaching practice.
- To incorporate digital thinking into my mind-set.
- To take control of my digital learning and development in a manner that is sustainable and achievable.
- To personally reflect on my perceptions and understanding of digital competencies and their place in my role as a teacher librarian.
- To improve the learning experience for my students through the integration of new teaching technologies.
- To develop more effective communication skills utilising new technologies.
- To evaluate any feedback from my students so as to improve the learner experience.
- To chart my digital progress to date through analysing my evidence and experience (evidence-based approach) – Map my



current level of digital competencies against Domain 5 of the National Forum's Professional Development Framework and the All Aboard Digital Skills metro map.

- To undertake a digital needs personal analysis – identify my digital deficits and my continuing professional needs (CPD) going forward? – create a personal digital roadmap.
- Evaluate this digital roadmap on a regular basis so as to reflect its fluidity and constantly changing dynamics.
- To develop an awareness of how my personal digital capacity is influenced by ITC Library's professional digital capacity.

The articulation of these values and goals will provide the pathway for me to develop personal and professional digital capacity in the undertaking of my professional practice.

Libraries play a vital role in our ever-evolving information climate. The ever-increasing pace at which society is confronted with a constant onslaught of information has left educational systems, cultural institutions, and individuals themselves in the lurch without the requisite skills and tools. Libraries are uniquely equipped to play a facilitative role in the acquisition and development of the information literacy skills that have become essential in this new, digital era; we are largely building on a foundation of the skills and services that libraries were already providing. Additionally, we are often less encumbered by the bureaucratic processes that characterize massive systemic overhauls in that we can introduce new programs, initiatives, and technologies to our arsenal with relative ease.

By extension, the staff members of a library are its most precious asset. To develop and maintain the skills necessary to be effective facilitators, educators, and creators, ongoing professional development must be a priority. For professional development itself to be effective, it must recognize the continuous evolution of roles, responsibilities, and abilities characteristic of many library positions.

For me, the National Professional Development Framework for All Staff Who Teach in Higher Education has proved to be a remarkably useful tool in cultivating professional development strategies that are unique to me. Further, its inbuilt flexibility has allowed me to adjust the means by which I intend to address each domain as my circumstances and contexts change without undermining my core values.

Bri Turner, formerly Library Assistant, Dundalk Institute of Technology

Libraries serve the informational, educational and recreational needs of their users through the provision of space, resources and services. The exact nature of that provision differs, of course, depending upon the specific context of each library but its quality in all libraries depends upon the quality of the skills and expertise of the staff responsible. That quality, in turn, depends upon the continuous professional development (CPD) of all library staff, whatever their individual function.

The Professional Development Framework (PDF) provides guidance and direction to inform CPD activities in higher education. It identifies the different types of activities and learning that constitute CPD. And the 5 'Domains' help to analyse and systematise the different elements to be considered when undertaking CPD. All of this is underpinned by reflective practice and by values that are very familiar to all libraries and library staff: inclusivity, authenticity, scholarship, learner-centredness and collaboration.

By engaging with the PDF, library staff benefit from a well-constructed and agreed schema they can use to not only assess and benchmark CPD needs (their own and those of others) but also to design and deliver CPD activities that address such needs. Furthermore, use of the PDF helps situate library staff on a par with other members of staff who teach, thereby legitimating the role and validating the CPD activities that follow.

In short, I consider it essential that all library staff practise CPD and those in higher education utilise the PDF to do so.

Dr Philip Cohen, President of the Library Association of Ireland (2018/9) and former Head of Library Services, DIT

The American Library Association identifies the core values of librarianship as: access, confidentiality/privacy, democracy, diversity, education and lifelong learning, intellectual freedom, the public good, preservation, professionalism, service and social responsibility. These wide reaching values have enormous societal value and impact. More specifically they inform the vision and mission of library services around the world and are executed in complex and rapidly changing economic, political, legislative and digital environments. To embody these values as librarians and to ensure that library strategies and services are fully aligned to the wide range of users that they serve, professional development is of critical importance. More practically professional development equips the librarian with the skills, knowledge and professional networks to manage a library service in an economic downturn or conversely when budgets are increased; to align the library's strategy to institutional strategy, to execute new ways of soliciting user feedback such as UX; to implement open source software and to offer research data management services to give just a handful of examples.

The National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning's Professional Development Framework for all Staff that Teach in Higher Education is a powerful, transformative tool within the Irish higher education landscape as revealed by a number of pilots initiated by the Forum in which librarians also participated. The Framework is flexible and wide reaching, capturing the full gamut of professional development activity via domains such as the Self, Professional Knowledge and Skills, Professional and Personal Digital Capacity etc. The typology of professional development activity also captures informal professional development activity as well as formal. The HECA Librarians are continuing to maintain e-portfolios which are mapped to the Framework. More importantly the Framework as evidenced by the librarian pilot has huge potential to reduce academic silos across the higher education sector.

Marie O'Neill, Head of Enhancement, CCT College Dublin