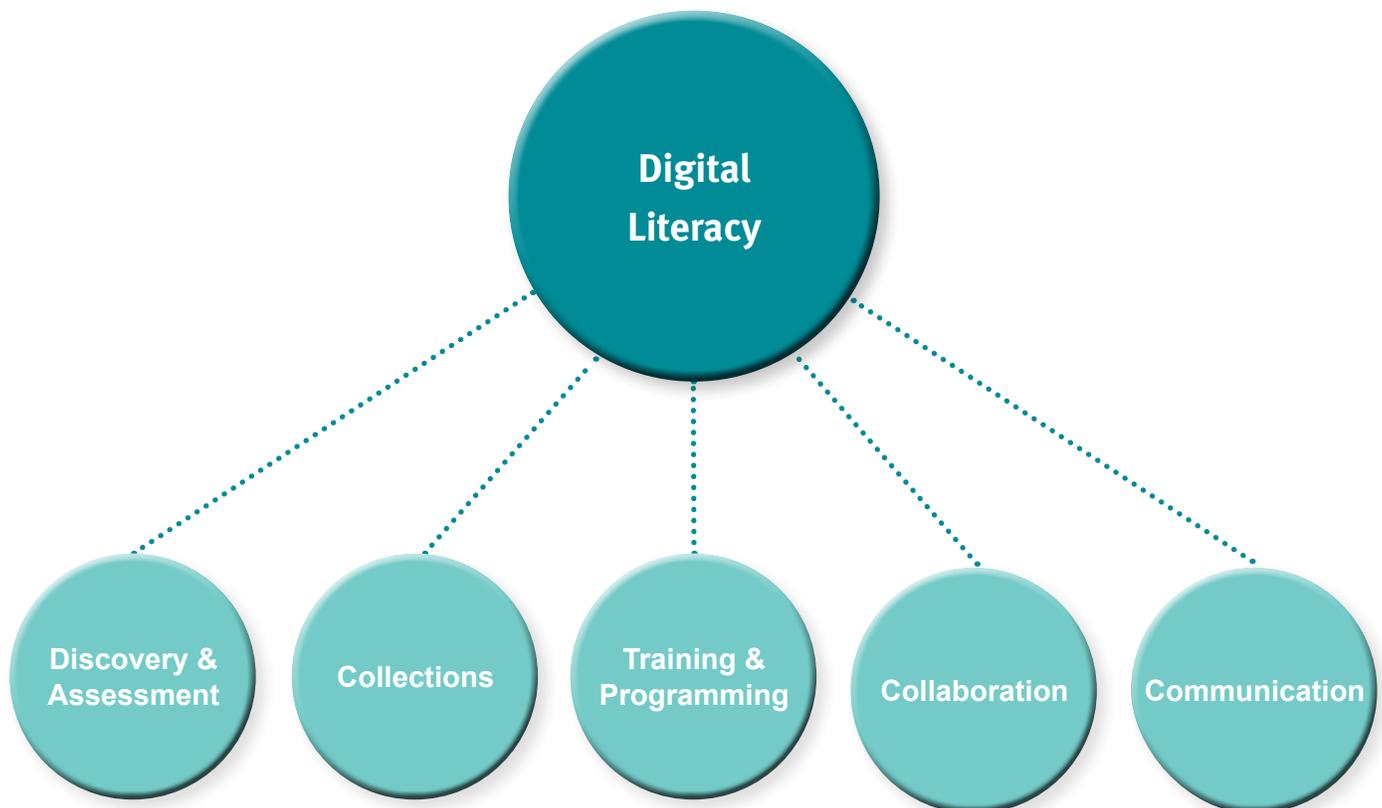# Digital Literacy Pathway

This pathway includes:

- Identifying patrons' needs for basic technology skills building

- Providing basic computer skills training

- Connecting with other agencies that provide core skills training.

Why is it important?

Now that most job applications and government forms are online, basic computer skills are a necessity. Many patrons lack these core skills that are now a requirement before they can move forward toward economic success in the 21st century.

Digital Literacy

Discovery & Assessment **Collections** **Training & Programming** **Collaboration** **Communication**

This pathway is online in Project Compass Workshop Materials:
www.webjunction.org/explore-topics/workforce-resources/materials.html.

Links to all resources are listed in the URL Reference List at the end of this document. The online version has embedded hyperlinks to resources.

Case Study: Boot Camp for the Basics at Bensenville

With unemployment rising and more patrons seeking help at the library, Bill Erbes, Director of Bensenville (IL) Community Public Library District, noticed that many of them were unaccustomed to the new demands on the 21st century job seeker.

Discovery: monster dot what?

Many of the unemployed who were coming to the Bensenville Community Public Library for help had not been in the job search market for years or they were from blue collar and manufacturing industries that had not required computer skills. They were not prepared for the 21st century version of job seeking. Faced with the reality that most jobs now require some computer interaction and most job applications are online, these patrons needed an extra boost to propel them back into the workforce. And they needed it up front before they could proceed any further. The idea of an intensive boot camp was born.

Collections: boot camp curriculum

As the first of its kind offered at Bensenville Library, the boot camp class required special handouts. Erbes and his staff developed the curriculum and teaching materials, a pre-survey, homework assignments and assessments.

In addition, the library has a full array of print and online resources to support job seekers. They subscribe to the Universal Class database, which offers a variety of self-paced, online computer skills courses.

Programs: immersion learning

The Job Searching Boot Camp was indeed intensive, running four consecutive days, four hours the first three days and six hours on the last day. There was no cost for the series but it was made clear that attendance at all classes was mandatory.

Twenty-four applicants filled out a pre-survey, indicating their level of experience with basic job-related computer skills, like using Word, searching on Monster.com or writing a résumé. Only 15 were selected for the boot camp; those not selected were considered to be too weak in fundamental skills (mouse and keyboard) and were offered private tutoring in their areas of deficiency.

In four days, the students became very familiar with word processing, managing and saving files, writing résumés and cover letters, and using e-mail. They learned about electronic job resources like Craiglist, Monster.com and CareerBuilder. They tapped the e-government services available at Illinois Career Center and the Illinois Department of Employment Security. Homework was assigned every day, adding to the full-time commitment to success.

On the final day, the participants dressed for and engaged in mock interviews, with a follow-up meeting for an assessment from their interviewers.

Collaboration: inside and out

Collaboration does not always involve external partners. For the boot camp, the youth services librarians rallied to the cause and cleared their schedules for those four days so they could guarantee child care for the program participants who needed it. The daycare service lasted all day so that the parents could complete their homework in the afternoons. Volunteers joined the effort. One stalwart 81-year-old volunteer printed out coloring book pages and spent hours on the floor with kids and crayons.

For the mock interviews, it was important that these be conducted by people not familiar to the class participants. The library enlisted community volunteers, who included members of the chamber of commerce, two library board members and three community members.

Communication: innovative and old-fashioned

When it came to publicity, Erbes eschewed the posters and brochures and went for his best PR tools—his staff. The boot camp project was the sole agenda item at a staff meeting a few weeks before the series started. This served to get everyone acquainted and excited about the project and encouraged them to talk it up out in the community. "A project like the boot camp, especially in a small library like ours, only works if every staff member knows what's going on and recognizes its value," says Erbes.

Outcomes: dedication pays

Every one of the 15 participants complied with the mandatory attendance; there were no absentees for the duration. They understood the value of this opportunity and applied themselves to it with diligence. The improvement in skill levels showed up dramatically in their before-and-after ability to complete the homework assignments.

Shortly after the end of the boot camp series, Erbes learned that nine of the 15 participants had gone back to work. That was at the end of 2010 when the job market was still looking quite bleak. A year later, all of the boot camp graduates are now working, though it's hard to make a direct linkage with their library experience.

Find the pre-survey and an example of the Word homework assessment attached to the **Job Searching Bootcamp** article on WebJunction.

Future plans

Erbes and his staff are unstoppable. Guided by the motto, "Satisfy and Delight," they work together to make that a reality for their community. They have applied for a grant from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity for a workshop series they are billing as *The Empowerment Project: Equal Access to the 21st Century*. The first of four parts will be an abbreviated version of the boot camp—*Keyboard to Creation: 3 Days to Computer Literacy*. In just three days, participants will focus intently on computer skills to get a solid foundation before going on to the next levels of instruction. The Bensenville community has a powerful little library fueling its success.

Discovery & Assessment	Resources and ideas to help you take action

Focus here to learn more about:
 	
• The core digital literacy needs of the un(der)employed
 	
• How the library can provide a friendly environment for patrons seeking basic computer skills.
	Consider:
	
	• Are you able to articulate digital literacy needs to potential partners?
	   ⇨ Look at **Collaboration**
	
	• Are you able to articulate to key community stakeholders how the library is building a digitally literate workforce?
	   ⇨ Look at **Communication**

What do you know about the basic technology training needs of your patrons?	
☐ Staff at my library know how to respond to the economically impacted in a positive and productive manner. ☐ I have a good understanding of the basic computer skills people need to seek employment.	• Value each individual's past experience and skills; be aware he/she may feel devalued due to the lack of technical skills. • Understand that many people have a fear of computers and may need extra empathy and support to overcome their intimidation. • Use the **Technology Proficiency Checklist** from the BTOP-Colorado group for patrons to self-assess their ability to "engage in the digital world." • Be aware that "tech savvy" does not necessarily equal knowledge, i.e., using Facebook is not a reliable indication of computer literacy for employment.
What can your library do to accommodate technology needs for beginners?	

☐ My library accommodates the needs of public computer users, especially those with beginner-level computer skills.	• Provide dedicated computer stations with extended time limits to allow for completing e-government forms and online tutorials.
	
	• Consider putting some "adult" computers in the children's area so parents can work and keep an eye on their kids at the same time.
	
	• Encourage patrons to bring in a family member or friend to help get familiar with computers; set up computers so that two people can work together.
	
	• Consider utilizing a laptop lab for greater flexibility:
	  – set up in a meeting room or off-site location
	  – add training software not generally loaded on the public PCs.
	
	• Provide wallet-sized cards for patrons to record account usernames and passwords.

Collections	Resources and ideas to help you take action

Focus here to:
 	
• Identify what you need to begin or augment a collection on basic computer skills.
	Consider:
	
	• Does your collection align with assessed needs for core technology skills?
	  ⇨ Look at **Discovery & Assessment**
	• Who can you collaborate with to share resources?
	  ⇨ Look at **Collaboration**

What do you need to begin or augment a collection on basic computer skills?	

☐ My library has a current collection of print and online resources relating to basic computer skills.
 	
☐ I know what databases my library has on basic computer skills.
 	
☐ If my library doesn't have adequate databases, I am able to network with other libraries to share database access.
	• See this January 2011 list of **New Books about Computer Skills** at the Aston (PA) Public Library.
	• Databases (for fee) commonly held by libraries for computer skills training:
	  – **Learning Express Library**
	  – **Job & Career Accelerator** (from Learning Express)
	  – **Tutor.com for Libraries**
	  – **Universal Class**

What pathfinders and guides does my library have for basic computer skills?	

☐ Basic computer skills books are readily available to patrons.
 	
☐ My library has created self-guided resources to get patrons started on computer basics.
	• Create colorful displays of basic computer skills books.
	• Create step-by-step instruction sheets (with lots of screen shots) on how to:
	  – complete online unemployment forms
	  – sign up for and use a free e-mail account
	  – open and use Word (or other word-processing program)
	  – save a document to the library computer's desktop or to a flash drive.
	• Print and laminate copies of the instructions sheets; place them next to the computers.

Training & Programming	Resources and ideas to help you take action
Focus here to: • Identify available self-paced training resources for basic computer skills • Identify programs and classes your library could offer to build basic skills and knowledge for patrons.	**Consider:** • Do your training/programming plans align with assessed needs? ⇨ Look at **Discovery & Assessment** • Do you have the collection you need to support basic training and programs? ⇨ Look at **Collections** • Who can you collaborate with to deliver training and programs? ⇨ Look at **Collaboration** • Do you have plans for effective marketing of your training and programs? ⇨ Look at **Communication**
What self-paced training resources for basic computer skills can my library offer?	
☐ I connect patrons who have never used a computer with resources to introduce them to the basic ideas of computing.	• Pasco County (FL) Library created **video tutorials** directed at people who have never used a computer at all. (Click the TUTORIALS tab.) • **CommonCraft** has simple, short videos to introduce the basics of technology: – **Computer Hardware in Plain English** – **Computer Software in Plain English** – **Web Search Strategies in Plain English**. • In the **New User Tutorial**, the user needs only to press the "Enter" key for the first half of the lessons. • The **Mouse Exercises** from SeniorNet.org get the user started with clicking and drag-and-drop. • Get some keyboard practice at many levels with the **Sense-Lang Touch Typing Program**. • For more advanced fun and practice, try an **Online Jigsaw Puzzle**.
☐ I connect patrons to free, good quality online sources of self-directed training on basic computer skills.	• DigitalLiteracy.gov has resources to **Learn the Basics**, which covers basic computer skills. • The Goodwill Community Foundation (GFC) has well-designed free online tutorials on **computer basics**. • Microsoft Digital Literacy offers a **Basic Curriculum** with an introduction to the computer, mouse and keyboard.

Training & Programming (cont.)	Resources and ideas to help you take action
What training or classes can my library offer to build computer skills?	
☐ My library offers training and classes to build a variety of technology skills.	• **Classes @ NYPL** (New York Public Library) shows an array of possible class topics. • The **Teaching Patrons** section on WebJunction has lesson plans and handouts for instructor-led or self-directed learning. • Use the **Computer and Internet Class Outlines** from the Tennessee State Library and Archives. • Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library shares a full suite of **computer class handouts** on computer basics, the Internet and Office 2007 applications, including **Basic Computer Skills for Employment**. • The Texas State Library offers a "courseinar" series for library staff on **Seniors and Libraries**; choose "guest access" to view.
☐ My library offers 1:1 tutoring on basic computer skills.	• Book a Librarian" services: **Skokie (IL) Public Library** provides an online form to book time; **Monona (WI) Public Library** has a 1-minute video to introduce the service. • Schedule regular drop-in clinics for 1:1 tutoring to help beginners get up to speed.
What programs or classes can my library offer to introduce patrons to new technology ideas?	

☐ I inform patrons about the use of social networking and an online presence.
 	
☐ I am able to plan a networking event, or series of events, at my library to facilitate peer knowledge exchange.
	• CommonCraft Videos on social media Include:
	  – **Social Media**
	  – **Social Networking**
	  – **Photo Sharing**
	  – **Social Bookmarking**
	  – **Blogs.**
	
	• **Technology Boot Camp** from the Louisville Free Public Library (KY) has lessons in blogging, cloud computing, social media, photo-sharing and RSS.
	
	• Help your patrons find networking interest groups through **Meetup.com**, like this **Urban Homesteaders** group in the Seattle area.
	
	• Start a new-to-computers users group at your library to help patrons support each other as they learn.

Collaboration	Resources and ideas to help you take action
Focus here to: • Identify strategic community connections and potential partners • Build relationships and develop partnerships to augment services and programs for those impacted by the economic downturn.	**Consider:** • Are these partners able to help the library augment its collections? ⇨ Look at **Collections** • Are these partners able to help the library communicate its value to the community? ⇨ Look at **Communication**
What partnerships can my library develop to provide basic computer skills training and resources?	
(For general information, see the Partnership and Collaboration Guide.) ☐ I have identified a list of other potential partners to approach, including nontraditional choices.	Identify other community agencies that may offer basic technology training: • Workforce development agency • Nonprofits dedicated to specific populations, such as youth, minority groups, immigrants, low-income, blind or disabled, or veterans • Schools and community colleges • Community centers
☐ I find volunteers from community organizations to help deliver services and programs.	• Enlist volunteers from local businesses, school clubs or senior centers to provide basic computer instruction. • Engage local high school students as qualified trainers in social networking. • Find a partner or volunteers to offer GED study help and testing in the library.

Communication	Resources and ideas to help you take action
Focus here to learn more about: • Marketing the library's services to the community • Communicating the value of the library's support for the economically impacted to community stakeholders.	**Consider:** • Are you able to engage partners to help with promotion of services or communication of value? ⇨ Look at **Collaboration**
How do I let community members know about the basic technology skills resources and training the library has to support them?	
(For general information on effective communication, see the *Getting the Word Out Guide*.) ☐ I provide clear and easy to find information about the ways in which the library helps to build basic skills.	• Create display cards with class schedules and place at all computer stations. • Place brochures with schedule of computer classes at workforce agency offices. • To encourage workshop attendance, offer a free flash drive for those who complete the training.
☐ I am able to communicate the value of the library as an essential support system for bridging the digital divide. ☐ I have connected with key stakeholders in the community to inform them of the library's relevant services and essential value.	• **Digital Literacy & Public Libraries** will help you articulate the vital role libraries play in bridging the digital divide. • Align the library's efforts with the **national effort** led by the FCC (Federal Communications Commission) to increase digital inclusion; emphasize the library's role in promoting digital literacy.

URL Reference List

Links to resources are listed below in the order they appear in this pathway.
The online version has embedded hyperlinks to resources.

Case Study

Job Searching Bootcamp and attached documents:
www.webjunction.org/documents/wj/Job_Searching_Bootcamp.html

Discovery & Assessment

Technology Proficiency Checklist:
https://sites.google.com/a/coloradovirtuallibrary.org/arsl2011nofear/assignments

Collections

Aston Public Library New Books about Computer Skills:
http://astonlibrary.org/2011/01/07/new-books-about-computer-skills/

Learning Express Library:
www.learnatest.com/LEL/index.cfm/general/moreInfo/skillBuildingAdult

Job & Career Accelerator: **www.jobandcareeraccelerator.com/**

Tutor.com for Libraries: **www.tutor.com/libraries**

Universal Class: **www.universalclass.com/i/subjects/computers.htm**

Training & Programming

Pasco County Library video tutorials: **http://pascolibraries.org/egovtools.shtml**

CommonCraft videos: **www.commoncraft.com/videos#technology**

New User Tutorial: **http://tech.tln.lib.mi.us/tutor/intro2.htm**

Mouse Exercises from SeniorNet.org:
www.seniornet.org/howto/mouseexercises/mousepractice.html

Sense-Lang Touch Typing Program: **www.sense-lang.org/typing/tutor/keyboarding.php**

Online Jigsaw Puzzle: **www.jigsawzone.com/**

DigitalLiteracy.gov Learn the Basics: **www.digitalliteracy.gov/content/learner**

Goodwill Community Foundation Computer tutorials: **www.gcflearnfree.org/computers**

Microsoft Digital Literacy Basic Curriculum: **www.microsoft.com/about/corporatecitizenship/citizenship/giving/programs/up/**
digitalliteracy/eng/BasicCurriculum.mspx

New York Public Library Classes @ NYPL: **www.nypl.org/events/classes**

WebJunction Teaching Patrons: **www.webjunction.org/explore-topics/patron-training.html**

Tennessee State Library and Archives Computer and Internet Class Outlines:
http://tsla.libguides.com/content.php?pid=202163&sid=1690853

Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library

    Computer Class Handouts: **www.heightslibrary.org/page/tech_training#handouts**

    Basic Computer Skills for Employment:
    www.heightslibrary.org/materials/training/Basic_Computer_Skills.pdf

The Texas State Library Seniors and Libraries: **www.tsl.state.tx.us/teal/?p=812**

Skokie Public Library "Book a Librarian": **www.skokielibrary.info/s_info/book_librarian.asp**

Monona Public Library "Book a Librarian": **www.mononalibrary.org/about/booklibrarian.htm**

Louisville Free Public Library (KY) Technology Boot Camp: **www.lfpl.org/bootcamp.html**

List of CommonCraft Videos: **www.commoncraft.com/#all-videos**

Meetup.com: **www.meetup.com/**

    Urban Homesteaders group: **www.meetup.com/Seattle-Urban-Homesteaders/**

Communication

Digital Literacy & Public Libraries:
www.plinternetsurvey.org/analysis/public-libraries-and-digital-literacy

FCC digital inclusion effort:
www.fcc.gov/document/chairman-genachowski-broadband-adoption