



**UNIVERSITY
OF LAGOS**



UNLEASHING HUMAN POTENTIALS

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DIGITAL LITERACY AND MODERN OFFICE TOOLS:

A UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS PERSPECTIVE

INTRODUCTION

Our previous edition, Transformational Leadership for Administrators, highlighted the importance of inspiring change, driving innovation, and leading teams toward organisational success. Amid ongoing advancements in the university landscape, good leadership now requires digital competence. As universities increasingly depend on technology for communication, records management, collaboration, and service delivery, administrators must have the skills to use these tools confidently. In this edition of Digital Literacy and Modern Office Tools, we explore practical strategies to build digital skills and leverage modern workplace technologies to improve efficiency, strengthen decision-making, and enhance the delivery of quality administrative services in higher education.

In today's fast-paced, technology-driven knowledge economy, digital literacy has become an indispensable skill across all sectors, particularly in higher education.

Digital literacy extends beyond basic computer proficiency. It encompasses the ability to locate, evaluate, create, and communicate information



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using digital technologies. It also involves an understanding of cybersecurity, data privacy, ethical technology use, and critical thinking in the consumption and dissemination of digital information.

When combined with proficiency in modern office tools, digital literacy enhances productivity, collaboration, and adaptability in an ever-evolving professional environment.

As a member of staff of the University of Lagos (UNILAG), I have observed that the effective use of digital technologies and modern office tools is no longer optional: it is essential for teaching, research, administration, and service delivery.

UNDERSTANDING DIGITAL LITERACY

Digital literacy refers to the ability to confidently, critically, and responsibly use digital technologies, including modern office tools, to access, manage, evaluate, and communicate information. It goes beyond the basic ability to operate a computer or smartphone.

A digitally literate individual can:

- navigate software applications and online platforms,
- use and adapt to emerging technologies with confidence,
- communicate professionally and safely through digital channels,
- manage and protect digital data,
- evaluate credibility of digital information, and
- understand cybersecurity and data privacy principles.

Within a university setting such as UNILAG, digital literacy includes competence in learning management systems, online research databases, digital communication platforms, data management tools, and cybersecurity practices.

For academic staff, digital literacy enhances teaching and research effectiveness. The integration of e-learning platforms, digital libraries, plagiarism detection software, and virtual collaboration tools has transformed the traditional classroom and research environment.

For non-teaching staff, digital literacy is equally critical. It supports efficient record management, data processing, coordination of activities, and effective administrative service delivery.

THE ROLE OF DIGITAL LITERACY AND MODERN OFFICE TOOLS IN TODAY'S UNIVERSITY OPERATIONS

Modern office tools have transformed workplace practices, shifting from paper-based and isolated processes to digital, cloud-based, and collaborative systems. Traditional tools such as typewriters, filing cabinets, and physical memos have largely been

replaced by digital documents, shared drives, and instant communication platforms.

At UNILAG, digital literacy modern office tools have significantly reshaped operational processes:

Paper-based systems are increasingly being replaced by digital solutions that promote accuracy, speed, and accountability. Tools such as word processors, spreadsheets, and presentation software—particularly Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint—are now standard for report preparation, data analysis, and presentations.

Cloud-based platforms and shared drives facilitate seamless collaboration and document management across departments and units.

Communication methods have evolved considerably. While email remains essential, it is complemented by instant messaging platforms (such as WhatsApp and SMS) and video conferencing tools like Microsoft Teams and Zoom. These platforms support virtual meetings, online lectures, workshops, and academic conferences, expanding the University's reach beyond physical boundaries.

Specialized software is also deployed for student records management, examinations processing, and research administration. These systems streamline operations, reduce manual errors, and enhance service delivery to both students and staff.

IMPORTANCE OF DIGITAL LITERACY IN ADMINISTRATION AND INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

The integration of digital literacy and modern office tools contributes significantly to

institutional effectiveness at UNILAG in several ways:

Improved efficiency and productivity: Automation of routine tasks enables faster information processing and efficient task completion. Digitally competent members of staff are better equipped to meet deadlines and adapt to new systems.

Enhanced collaboration and communication: Effective administration depends heavily on communication. Digital tools enable real-time interaction among staff, students, and external stakeholders, fostering teamwork and knowledge sharing in a large and diverse institution.

Greater transparency and accountability: Proper use of digital records and tracking systems ensures accurate documentation and easier monitoring of activities.

Strengthened data security: Increased awareness of safe digital practices reduces vulnerabilities and protects institutional data.

Adaptability in a changing environment: Ability to confidently learn and apply new digital tools and workflows to stay efficient, relevant, and effective in delivering administrative services in higher education.

Addressing these challenges requires:

Deliberate investment in capacity building through regular training programmes, workshops, and practical hands-on sessions to enhance digital competencies.

Supportive policies that encourage continuous learning.

Mentorship and peer learning initiatives to build confidence and reduce resistance to change.

Sustained institutional investment in reliable digital infrastructure to maintain progress.

CONCLUSION

Digital literacy and modern office tools are no longer optional, they are fundamental to effective and sustainable work practices in modern universities. Together, they promote productivity, collaboration, innovation, and institutional resilience.

For UNILAG, embracing these competencies is vital to maintaining excellence in teaching, research, and service delivery. As members of staff, our commitment to continuous digital learning and innovation will strengthen our collective capacity and reinforce the University's position as a leading institution in higher education.

DIGITAL LITERACY IN ADMINISTRATION: CHALLENGES AND THE WAY FORWARD

Despite its importance, several challenges hinder the development of digital literacy in administration. These include:

- Variations in digital skill levels among staff
- Inadequate technological infrastructure
- Limited access to structured training opportunities
- Resistance to technological change