



Certification Test Goals

This module sets out essential concepts and skills relating to the fundamentals of managing online information.

Successful candidates will be able to:

- Determine what online information is needed to meet a particular requirement.
- Search securely for online information using search engines and social media applications.
- Critically evaluate information using a range of criteria.
- Manage and organise information using a range of tools.
- Plan, draft, review and deliver online information.

1 Information Concepts

1.1 Key Concepts

1.1.1 Understand the term information. Be aware that information is increasingly accessed online.

- Information can be described as the processed output of facts or data which are shared leading to increased awareness.
- Information is available on the Internet and can be accessed using a web browser on a computer. Information accessed in this way is called "online information."
- Information is increasingly accessed online as more people than ever before have access to the Internet. Using the Internet, information can be quickly retrieved and shared globally.

1.1.2 Outline the advantages of online information like: accessibility, speed, global reach.

- **Accessibility** means anyone can access online information wherever they are, whenever they want, through an Internet connection.
- **Speed** refers to the ability of online information to travel along computer networks almost instantaneously.
- **Global reach** means that users can access and share information with other users around the world, and not just in their country or region.

1.1.3 Outline the disadvantages of online information like: difficulty in regulating, dependency on infrastructure, ease of plagiarism.

- **Difficulty in regulating** means anyone can publish information on the web and as a result online information is difficult to regulate.
- **Dependency on infrastructure** means that access to online information is dependent on having a device.
- **Ease of plagiarism** online is a result of how easy it is for users to "copy and paste" information found online and present it as their own work.

1.1.4 Outline steps involved in searching for and using online information to create new content: define what information is required, search for information, evaluate search results, create new content.

- **Define what information is required** by identifying a problem or selecting a suitable topic and considering the type of information that is needed.
- **Search for information** by creating a search strategy and broadening or narrowing the search as needed.
- **Evaluate search results** using criteria to evaluate the information found.
- **Create new content** by planning, drafting, reviewing and delivering new information derived from the search.

1.2 Information Sources

1.2.1 Understand the purpose of different online information sources like: informing, presenting opinions, persuading, entertaining.

- **Informing** involves giving facts and details on current affairs, and special interest items.

- **Presenting opinions** involve giving views of a topic or critiquing an event.

- **Persuading** involves promoting sales and encouraging users to buy/shop.

- **Entertaining** can involve providing engaging, light-hearted or humorous content.

1.2.2 Identify ways of obtaining online information like: search engines, wikis, blogs, microblogs, Internet forums.

- **Search engines** – Websites that search the World Wide Web for keywords specified by a user and return a list of web pages where the keywords are found.

- **Wikis** – Websites where users can edit information, allowing collaboration on ideas.

- **Blogs** – Websites that contain content that is updated on an ongoing basis. The content is typically made up of a group or individual's opinions, posted on a particular topic.

- **Microblogs** – Very short blog posts where users post about particular topics and other users can read and comment on the topics.

- **Internet forums** – Discussion areas on websites where people can post messages about a particular topic.

2 Searching for Information

2.1 Defining the Information Need

2.1.1 Identify steps in defining the information need like: identify a topic, determine what type of information is needed, collect background information.

- **Identify a topic** – Start with a subject that is of interest, consider possible topics within the broader subject, brainstorm to consider the topic in more detail.

- **Determine what type of information is needed** – Why is the information needed, who is the target audience, how much information is needed, is it important for the information to be current, is a particular format important, should a particular viewpoint be represented?

- **Collect background information** – Consider any organisations, individuals or groups that might have information on a topic, research the topic, check the table of contents in online texts for key ideas regarding a topic, survey content and note main ideas.

2.1.2 Recognise techniques for developing a search strategy like: identifying the search question, listing keywords, using synonyms.

- **Identifying the search question** – Consider stating the topic as a question to help clarify the topic. Good search questions should set a context, and the answer to the question should provide the information needed.

- **Listing keywords** – Keywords are important words which are descriptive in nature and highlight central concepts as part of a search/research process. Only words central to a search are keywords.

- **Using synonyms** – Synonyms are words or phrases which have the same meaning as another word or phrase. Synonyms are useful when searching for information to help find related ideas.

2.2 Using a Search Engine

2.2.1 Carry out a search in a search engine. Recognise that a search can be broadened, narrowed.

- Open a search engine.
- Click the search box in the search engine window.
- Enter a keyword or phrase and press the **Return** key or select the **search** icon.

2.2.2 Refine a search using techniques like: exact phrase, truncation, Boolean operators, relational operators.

- **Exact phrase** is useful when searching for an exact word or phrase.
- **Boolean operators** are useful for combining and excluding keywords in a search. Boolean phrases include AND, OR and NOT.
- **Truncation** is useful when searching for variations of a word. A truncation symbol or wildcard, such as *, is used beside the word.

2.2.3 Use advanced search engine features like: date, language, region.

- Type www.google.com into the search bar.
- Hit **Enter**.

- Perform a search on the browser.

- Filter the search results by clicking **Options** and then **Advanced search**.

- Select the appropriate criteria to filter the results.

2.2.4 Identify elements of a search engine results page like: output order, advertisements.

- A Search Engine Results Page (**SERP**) sorts search results from the World Wide Web into an output order determined by the search engine's algorithm.

- **Advertisements** will appear at the top of a SERP. The Search results will appear on the SERP with the web pages most relevant at the top.

2.2.5 Understand the term cookies, pop-ups. Be aware of the need to log off websites to ensure safe browsing.

- **Cookies** are pieces of information sent from a website to a user's browser when the user is browsing the websites.

- **Pop-ups** are advertisements that "pop-up" in a new browser window.

2.3 Using Social Media Applications

2.3.1 Identify the types of online information that can be found using social media applications like: encyclopaedias, news updates, personal opinions, advertising and discussions.

- **Encyclopaedias** – Wikis allow users to collaborate in creating documents to share knowledge about a particular topic.

- **News updates** – RSS feeds in social media applications allow users to be notified of website updates where content regularly changes.

- **Personal opinions** – Social networks, blogs and microblogs allow users to comment on a particular subject that can be personal or business related.

- **Advertising** – Many companies advertise their products or services through social media, posting frequent updates about their business and encouraging users to participate in competitions and special offers.
- **Discussions** – Users can review and contribute to discussions in Internet forums.

2.3.2 Use social media applications to find users and specific interest groups.

- Log in to Facebook and click in the search bar.
- Enter the name of a user, topic or specific group that you are looking for.
- Click the appropriate category to look in from the tabs displayed e.g. **People, Pages, Groups**.
- To request to join a group click **Join**.

2.3.3 Create lists to organise users, specific interest groups.

- From the **Home** page, in the Friends section, click **More**.
- Click **Create List**.
- In a new window, enter the name for the list.
- Enter the names of friends that you want to add to the list.
- Click **Create**.

To create an interest list:

- Scroll down along the left-hand side of the News Feed and click **Interests**.
- On the **Interests** page, click **Add Interests**.
- Click **Create List**.
- Use the search box to find people or pages to add to the list.
- Select the appropriate amount of people or pages to add to the list.
- Click **Next**.

2.3.4 Create, find posts, messages.

To post a comment:

- On the **Home** page, enter comments in **What's on your mind?**
- Click **Post**.

To find a specific post:

- Click the search icon.
- Enter names or keywords that appear in the post.
- The results of the search will show the part of the post where the keywords appear.

To send a message:

- On the **Home** page, click **Messages**.
- Click **+ New Message**.
- Enter the name or e-mail address of the recipient in the **To** field.
- Select the recipient(s).
- Enter text in the message and click **Send**.

To find new and past messages from a specific person or to find keywords in a message:

- On the **Home** page, click **Messages**.
- Enter a name or keyword into the search box above your conversations.

2.3.5 Share a post, message.

- Click **Share** under a post.
- Choose from one of the options that appear.
- Click **Post** to share.

2.3.6 Search for online information using a wiki.

To search for information using Wikipedia:

- Click the **Address Bar** of a web browser.
- Enter the URL.
- Click the search box at the top right of Wikipedia.
- Enter a keyword or phrase.
- Click the search icon.

2.3.7 Understand potential risks when searching for online information using social networking applications like: misleading information, false identities, phishing, unsolicited messages.

- **Misleading information** – As anyone can post information on social media websites, information posted may not be accurate or credible.
- **False identities** – Some people using social networking applications may not be who they say they are.
- **Phishing** – This relates to websites and emails that look authentic but are actually fake and have only been created to access personal information, such as bank account details.

- **Unsolicited messages** – These are commonly called "spam" and are junk mail, which the user has not requested.

2.3.8 Set common account privacy options in social media applications.

To set read access:

- On the **Home** page, click the **Gear** button.
- Click **Privacy Settings**.
- In the **Who can see my stuff?** section beside **Who can see your future posts?**, click **Edit**.
- Select the option preferred from the drop-down list.
- Click **Close**.

To set write access:

- Click the **Gear** button.
- Click **Privacy Settings**.
- Click the **Timeline and Tagging** button.
- Beside **Who can post on your timeline?** Click **Edit**.
- Select the option preferred from the drop-down list.
- Click **Close**.

To set user invites:

- Click the **Privacy Shortcuts** button beside the **Gear** button.
- Click **Who can contact me?**
- Under **Who can send me friend requests**, click **Edit**.
- Select the option preferred from the drop-down list.
- Click the **Privacy Shortcuts** button.

3 Evaluating & Organising Information

3.1 Evaluating Information

3.1.1 Recognise that online information can be evaluated under the headings of: accuracy, authority, currency, coverage, objectivity, relevancy.

- **Accuracy** – how correct is the information?
- **Authority** – how credible is the information?
- **Currency** – how up-to-date is the information?
- **Coverage** – how complete is the information?
- **Objectivity** – how objective or biased is the information?
- **Relevancy** – how relevant is the information?

3.1.2 Evaluate accuracy of online information using criteria like: extent of errors, evidence of research, peer-review validation.

- **Extent of errors** – as well as checking for factual errors, check to see if the content contains mistakes such as miscalculations, spelling mistakes, or grammatical errors.
- **Evidence of research** – identify supporting research or evidence to help prove the accuracy of information.
- **Peer-review validation** – peer-review means that the content has been subject to scrutiny by other experts in the relevant area.

3.1.3 Evaluate authority of online information using criteria like: author's credentials, availability of contact details, publisher's reputation.

- **Author's credentials** – is it clear who the author is? What level of expertise does the author have?
- **Availability of contact details** – are there contact details available such as e-mail, phone number, or postal address?
- **Publisher's reputation** – who are the publishers of the content and do they represent a particular point-of-view?

3.1.4 Evaluate currency of online information using criteria like: presence of date, frequency of updates, ongoing validity of content.

- **Presence of date** – does the information have a date on it?
- **Frequency of updates** – is the information regularly updated? Are all associated links and references updated as necessary?
- **Ongoing validity of content** – is it important that information is current? Is the information still valid?

3.1.5 Evaluate coverage of online information using criteria like: depth, extent of omissions, acknowledgement of omissions.

- **Depth** – does the information cover historical, background and current information?
- **Extent of omissions** – are there any obvious omissions in the information?

- **Acknowledgement of omissions** – has it been acknowledged that any information has been intentionally omitted?

3.1.6 Evaluate objectivity of online information using criteria like: identifying the purpose, determining if fact or opinion.

- **Identifying the purpose** – is the purpose of the information to inform, persuade, sell or entertain? Are there any external influencers to the site the information appears on?
- **Determining if fact or opinion** – are the author / publisher associated with a particular viewpoint? Is the information presented with supporting evidence and a subjective viewpoint?

3.1.7 Evaluate relevancy of online information for a target audience using criteria like: age, existing level of knowledge, language skills.

- **Age** – is the information appropriate for the age group?
- **Existing level of knowledge** – is the information at an appropriate level for the audience's level of expertise?
- **Language skills** – is the information presented in the correct language for the audience, in terms of difficulty of terms and terminologies used?

3.2 Organising Information

3.2.1 Recognise tools to organise online information like: tables, bookmarks, outlines, storyboards, social bookmarking sites.

- **Tables** – tables or grids can be used to organise ideas by placing similar themes in columns or rows.
- **Bookmarks** – bookmarks are stored links to favourite places such as websites or places in a document, allowing the user to quickly return to the desired place.
- **Outlines** – outlines are used to organise content hierarchically.
- **Storyboards** – storyboards are used to organise images for the purpose of preparing a visual piece, such as a movie or interactive media sequence.
- **Social bookmarking sites** – social bookmarking sites are online services that allow users to organise and store bookmarks to online resources.

3.2.2 Recognise the need to record and acknowledge sources of information, seek permission as appropriate.

- When researching a topic it is important to note sources of information in order to give credit to the authors of the sources.
- All sources used in the production of a new work must be acknowledged and referenced as a citation or footnote.
- Using other people's work without proper acknowledgement is plagiarism and is a breach of codes of conduct in many institutions.

3.2.3 Recognise storage considerations like: ease of access, version control, distribution, access log, cost.

- **Ease of access** – who will have access to the information, and how will access be controlled?
- **Version control** – how will versions of documentation be controlled? What processed will be followed to name, store and update versions?
- **Distribution** – how will information be distributed?
- **Access log** – will there be a log maintained of who has accessed the information for security purposes?
- **Cost** – how much will it cost to store the information? What are the storage alternatives and how much do they cost?

4 Communicating Information

4.1 Planning and Drafting Information

4.1.1 Identify considerations when planning to communicate new information like: purpose, amount of detail, target audience, format, language, style.

- **Purpose** – consider the purpose of the information, whether it is to persuade, inform or give an opinion.
- **Amount of detail** – the amount of detail may range from a short e-mail confirming an opinion to a long video designed to advertise a product.
- **Target audience** – it is important to know the level of existing knowledge and expectations of the target audience to avoid over-simplifying or over-complicating the information.
- **Format** – the target audience will influence the format used, for example visual media may be

more appropriate for some, whereas text-based information may be more appropriate for others.

- **Language** – considerations include the level of language and whether specific terminology should be used.
- **Style** – the format chosen and target audience will influence the style **approach**.

4.1.2 Identify structural elements when drafting new information like: **introduction, body, conclusion**.

- **Introduction** – the introduction should outline the purpose of the information, setting the context and direction the piece.
- **Body** – the body should be made up of a collection of ideas or concepts that flow from one to another.
- **Conclusion** – a conclusion sums up the points made and gives a statement of the resulting opinion or decision.

4.1.3 Identify legal considerations involved in drafting new information like: **copyright, Intellectual Property Rights, disclaimers, data protection, defamation**.

- **Copyright** – an original work such as a book, video, artwork, or design is automatically protected by copyright law.
- **Intellectual Property Rights** – Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) are rights granted to an author or creator of an output from intellectual activity, such as an invention.
- **Disclaimers** – A disclaimer is a statement intended to limit the liabilities that may arise from the information piece.
- **Data protection** – data protection policies relate to good practices when using data.
- **Defamation** – defamation is the intentional communication of a false statement that harms an individual's or organisation's reputation and can result in legal proceedings.

4.1.4 Identify ethical considerations involved in drafting new information like: **avoiding falsification, plagiarism**.

- **Falsification** – falsification refers to the act of providing false information, such as altering facts or knowingly re-using false information.
- **Plagiarism** – plagiarism is the unethical use of someone else's work by presenting their ideas or words as your own without appropriate acknowledgement.

4.1.5 Understand how a citation is used when creating information.

- **Citations** allow users to give credit to original ideas and allow others to check original sources for information for accuracy and correct interpretation of context.

4.2 Reviewing and Delivering Information

4.2.1 Identify criteria for reviewing a draft like: **clarity, accuracy, conciseness, consistency, logic of argument, language, style**.

- **Clarity** – is the information easy to understand, and are the purpose and arguments clear to follow?
- **Accuracy** – is the information technically correct? Are sources of information accurately represented and acknowledged?
- **Conciseness** – is the information to the point and are the points summarised?
- **Consistency** – is the information and opinion presented consistent throughout the piece?
- **Logic of argument** – is there a logical flow of ideas through the piece from an introduction to a conclusion?
- **Language** – is the language appropriate for the target audience?
- **Style** – is there a uniform style used throughout the piece?

4.2.2 Be aware of the consequences involved in publishing online information like: **permanency, security risks, loss of control**.

- **Permanency** – information once published can be difficult to remove and may end up being permanent.
- **Security risks** – confidential information should not be published online as hackers or identity thieves may misuse this information.
- **Loss of control** – information can be shared and forwarded without the author knowing, so information which may have been private to begin with can quickly become public.

For more information,
visit: www.ecdl.org