The Digital Literacy Contest: Evaluating Higher Level Information Literacy Skills

Helga B. Visscher  
*The University of Alabama*

Karen S. Croneis  
*The University of Alabama*

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/gaintlit

Part of the Curriculum and Instruction Commons, and the Information Literacy Commons

**Recommended Citation**


This presentation (open access) is brought to you for free and open access by the Conferences & Events at Digital Commons@Georgia Southern. It has been accepted for inclusion in Georgia International Conference on Information Literacy by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons@Georgia Southern. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@georgiasouthern.edu.
The Digital Literacy Contest (DLC):

Evaluating Higher Level Information Literacy Skills

Helga Visscher
Karen Croneis
The University of Alabama

Georgia Conference on Information Literacy
September 25, 2009
Digital Literacy Contest is ...

• A high speed battle to find information online.
• Outreach to students about library resources.
• Partnership between [library] and GNIC.
• Assessment of students’ information seeking skills.
• A way to earn “I’m smartest” bragging rights.
• A new (2008) online game.
• Challenging and FUN!
• A serendipitous discovery....
How DLC Works

• Answer 20 questions in 30 minutes using only online resources (including library resources)
• Provide answer & URL where it was found
• Questions have different values (1-3 pts)
• Jeopardy-style scoring:
  – Correct answers win points
  – Incorrect ones are penalized
• Highest total scores win ca$h, prizes, and “bragging rights”
Global Networked-Intelligence Contests (GNIC)

• Mission: *Engage Students & Promote Resources*
• Contests created for students, by students
• As partner, GNIC would
  – Create custom UA DLC web page (recruitment & registration)
  – Handle publicity
  – Develop questions for contest
  – Arrange for cash prizes, pizza, soft drinks
  – Score tests, provide instant results, identify winners
  – PILOT with UA: Capture keystrokes for UA librarians to use in research project on information-seeking strategies. [Didn’t happen due to bandwidth problem on UA end.]
DLC Question: Library Resource

• (1 pt.) In August 2008, Nicholas Carr’s “Is Google Making us Stupid?” mused about the dumbing-down effects of the world’s favorite search engine. Damon Darlin wrote a popular response in the New York Times. Use Lexis-Nexis Academic to find Darlin’s article. What is its title?

  • Answer: ____________________
  • Source URL: ________________
  • /SAVED/ /NOT SAVED/
DLC Question: Internet Resource

(3 pts) Chris Jordan is an American photographer who explores consumption in the hopes of "cultural self-inquiry." What is the title of this photograph?

• Answer: ________________
• Source URL: ________________
• /SAVED/ /NOT SAVED/
“DLC Schools”

- Brown University
- Cornell University
- Hanover College (IN)
- Indiana University
- Northwestern Univ.
- Penn State University
- Purdue University
- Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Sci. & Tech.
- University of Alabama
- Univ. of Connecticut
- University of Florida
- University of Michigan
- U of Wisconsin- Milwaukee
- Western Illinois University
Why UA Decided To Host DLC

• Engage users in a new, exciting way
• Increase use of expensive digital resources
• Expose students (again) to library databases
• Combine fun and learning in a game format
• Seize opportunity to partner with GNIC to
  – Strengthen GNIC business model
  – Experiment with outsourcing for reasonable fee
  – Conduct library research project to “identify & analyze strategies students use to find information online”
Implementation Steps

• Submit proposals
• Secure approval, funding, IRB permission
• Finalize contract with GNIC
• Begin contest preparation (GNIC & Library)
• Hold contest
• Follow up with thank you’s, evaluation, report, presentation…
Posters

Placed on Bulletin Boards around campus:

• Student Center
• Food courts and dining areas
• Libraries
• Academic Depts.
• Residence Halls
Table Top Publicity

- Libraries
- Dining halls

Contacts
- Campus & local newspaper
- Radio
- Facebook – UA
- Students and organizations

The Digital Literacy Contest

Tues. April 7th
4:30-6:00PM
Free food
$200+ in cash prizes

A high-speed battle of minds to find information online...

You will have 30 minutes to answer 30 questions using the Internet.

Free contest open to all students and faculty.
Test your Internet skills and cognitive agility.
How well can you wield the Internet as a mental prosthetic? Prove your prowess!

Space is limited. Register online or by phone today! Text SIGNMEUP your@email.com to 41411.

Contest hosted by the IU Libraries in room E174 of the Herman B Wells Library (south entrance).

Digitalliteracycontest.org
Day of Contest

4:30 pm: Students arrive. DLC creator explains rules/procedures. Students directed to computers & logon to DLC site.

5:00 pm: Contest appears on DLC website. Students begin work.

5:30 pm: Contest closes. GNIC does scoring. Students complete survey about contest.

5:50 pm: Gather for refreshments, talk with DLC creator, learn results and winners, photos.
Daniel Poynter explained game rules to student participants.
Students worked diligently on tests
And The Winners Were ...

1st ($100) : 2 undergrads (F, M) tied at 18 points
2nd ($75): 1 grad (F) with 17
3rd ($50): 1 grad (F) with 16

Score Information
Range: -7 to 18
Median (middle): 8
Mode (most freq.): 7
Mean (average): 8.27
Demographics

- 76% Undergraduates
- 24% Grad students
- 55% male
- 45% female

Registration

April 20\textsuperscript{th}: 30 registered
April 22\textsuperscript{nd}: 79 registered
Participants: 41
Anticipated v. Actual Performance

In this contest, I think I’ll do

- Extremely Well (90%+)
- Well (70-89%)
- Average (30-69%)
- Not Very Well (10-29%)
- Very Poor (<10%)

* 20 answered correctly all (100%) of the questions they attempted

-> Time constraint and variable point values influenced final scores.
Feedback about DLC

83% want to compete again
76% would refer a friend
92% think DLC tests important skills
61% said 1st library event in the past year
87% believe experience was educational
86% said UA should host DLC again
Library Instruction Effectiveness

“The University Library teaches me Internet research skills effectively.”

- Strongly Agree/Agree 14
- Neutral 11
- Disagree/Strongly Disagree 8
- Don’t Know 9

So, 66% (2 out of 3)

→ don’t know if the library teaches skills OR
→ think that the library does not teach online research skills effectively.
Preferred Learning Mechanisms

- Online Tutorials: 24%
- YouTube Videos: 22%
- Workshop: 16%
- One-on-one Help: 12%
- Podcasts: 9%
- Handouts: 9%
- Reference Desk: 8%
- IM: 3%
Student Comments

Why I came....
“I enjoy computers.”
“Interested in user search strategies.”
“Wanted to see how good I was at using the Internet.”
“Want to learn more about digital literacy & how it impacts libraries.”

What I learned...
“Overwhelming number of databases vastly underused.”
“Sometimes library databases are the most effective way to find information.”
“Google beats the databases forward, backward, and sideways!”
Room for Improvement

• UA Bandwidth problem due to “rogue server”.
• Students required to attend “start-up” meeting to be assigned lab location.
• Computer labs (contest sites) were in different locations than start-up/wrap-up meeting.
• Used computer labs in 2 separate buildings.
• Bigger cash prizes.
• MORE FOOD!
Next Time...

• Depends on library budget.
• Improve signage.
• Have more people to help.
• Be clearer about purpose & target audience.
• Deal with perceptions of DLC as “too hard” & scores as “too low”.
• Have contract signed before the contest.
For more information

• DLC site at http://www.DigitalLiteracyContest.org

• Facebook group: Digital Literacy Contest

• Helga Visscher hvissche@ua.edu or Karen Croneis kcroneis@ua.edu, McLure Education Library,

Thank you for your time this afternoon!