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Panel Discussion: Supporting the development of students’ digital capabilities

Panna Karlinger, Saffron Passam, Megan Williams

Facilitated by Sioned Llywelyn

Gwasanaethau Gwybodaeth gyda Ysgol Addysg, Seicoleg, Ysgol Fusnes Aberystwyth | Information Services with the School of Education, Psychology, Aberystwyth Business School

Digital capabilities are the skills, knowledge and practices that equip us to live, learn and work in a digital society and are therefore essential in a world where digital technologies permeate every aspect of our lives. The UK government have projected that within the next 20 years, 90% of jobs will require people to work with digital technologies (UK Government, 2017). All students should therefore have an opportunity to assess and develop their digital capabilities throughout their time at university. Developing these capabilities will help give students the best possible chance of being able to compete successfully for employment, to thrive in a digital society, and to engage more effectively with digital technologies while studying. Digital study skills may include efficient literature searching, data management, communication and collaboration skills, and being able to learn and reflect using digital tools.

The Digital Discovery Tool, developed by JISC, is a bilingual resource which allows students to reflect on their digital capability and their confidence with various digital technologies. As part of the [Digital Capabilities Project](https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/is/library-services/digital-capabilities/), various approaches through which students could engage with the Digital Discovery Tool were piloted with four academic departments (Aberystwyth Business School, Psychology, School of Education and English & Creative Writing) during Semester 1 (2021/22). As a result of the pilot and, importantly, the feedback gathered from the staff and students involved, all Foundation Year and First Year students will be supported to engage with the Digital Discovery Tool from academic year 2022/23.

During this panel discussion, staff and students will share their experiences of being involved in the pilot, in addition to providing valuable insights into the implementation of various approaches and sharing good practices. The panel will also discuss the wider challenges and successes of embedding skills such as digital capabilities within the curriculum.

