**BETWEEN "DIGITAL NATIVES" AND "DIGITAL IMMIGRANTS"**

addressing IL needs of the mixed student population in a small academic library

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### Introduction

Digital literacy creates a challenging divide within the classroom with mixed students population for librarians because the object of instruction heavily relies on the basic digital literacy skills and without students' basic foundation of digital literacy, information literacy instruction becomes extremely difficult and sometimes impossible to teach. We have decided to use Prensky’s framework regarding “digital natives” and “digital immigrants” and that of some of his critics to understand a correlation between information literacy and digital literacy as well as to outline how confidence levels in technology use relate to the performance of the students.

Even though some authors claim that digital native/digital immigrant divide is dying (see Holton, 2010), or that this term might be misleading or overgeneralized (Bennett et al., 2008), a significant body of literature and practice indicates that there is still a strong digital divide within the classroom, which impacts learning to a great extent because of the fundamental difference in students' technical skills.

In our study, we have used both quantitative and qualitative methods as well as observation to see how the confidence level in the use of technology impacts students’ learning and measurement of success in the information literacy sessions facilitated by the library. While digital technology changes the terrain of higher education, it also requires a new innovative approach to learning and the understanding of the complexity of digital literacy in relation to information literacy. Proficiency in digital literacy does not automatically mean higher proficiency in information literacy and, for librarians, involves new challenges and tasks to be able to facilitate students' transition towards “digital wisdom” (Prensky, 2012).

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### Strategies for bridging the digital gap

- **Welcome a variety of ways to express knowledge**
- **Provide support from the library on variety of issues relevant to the use of technology**
- **Engage digital natives with new and engaging technology and combine it with the traditional teaching methods.**
- **Provide support from the library on variety of issues relevant to the use of technology**
- **Facilitate equal access to information and eliminate the digital divide through individualized approach to each student**
- **Explore partnership opportunities on- and off-campus and provide multiple instructors for support for students who are less technically savvy.**

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### Sources

- Fieldhouse, M. (2009). Digital Natives: can information literacy save them from information anarchy?
- Eshet Holton, D. (2010). The digital natives/digital immigrants distinction is dead or at least dying,