

## Digital Technologies and Adult Literacy Transcription

\*Slide 1\*

**Penny Pearson:** Alright everyone, we've started recording and again I'd like to welcome you all to our webinar. I would like to turn it over to our host, which is Marian Thacher, and she is our Director here at OTAN. Marian are you online?

**Marian Thacher:** Yes I am. Thanks Penny and Hi everyone. I hope you can hear me. I just want to welcome you to this webinar. We are really excited about doing this with our Canadian colleagues and putting it out nationally so this is really fun for us to have people from all over North America.

OTAN is an adult education leadership project in California, specifically focused on technology and distance learning so we provide support to adult education practitioners as far as using technology in the classroom and with distance learning, among other things that we do. And so AlphaPlus Centre in Ontario, Canada is like a sister organization of ours doing those same things in Canada. They provide expertise to support adult educators through disseminating research information and training to adult educators on innovated learning technologies; what technologies to use, how to use them and when to use them. And so we are going to hear some of their wisdom that they've called today regarding that and the presenters we have are Matthias Sturm who's the Distance Learning Coordinator at AlphaPlus and Maria Moriarty who is the Information Resources Officer. So thank you very much and let's get started.

**Maria Moriarty:** Hi everybody. This is Maria Moriarty and I'm in Toronto, Ontario, Canada and I work at AlphaPlus and I've worked here for more years than I'm willing to admit. I'm going to do the first part of this presentation and then I will be joined later by my friend and colleague Matthias Sturm.

First of all I just need you to let me know that everybody can hear me and I'm not too loud and I'm not too soft. Is everybody okay with what I'm doing? (Speaker checks replies in Chat Window). Great! As I said I'm in Canada but in case you notice a slight accent it's because I was born in Ireland. I've lived in Canada for many years but you know what they say; you can take the woman out of the bog but you can't take the bog out of the woman. So let's get going.

My part of this presentation is based around a literature scan and some analysis that I've been doing at AlphaPlus for the last several months around this use of digital technologies and adult literacy. We work directly with practitioners, we don't run a program from AlphaPlus, so our point of contact with the literacy field is through our practitioners. I'm just going to go to the next slide.

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This quote is from a wonderful piece of work from the United States, by Mary McCain. She did it in 2008/2009 for the Council for the Advancement of Adult Literacy and it's a piece of work that I think really sparked us to think very carefully about digital technology, about e-learning, about distance

learning, access, digital literacy, digital skills in adult literacy and how those things intersect. How the work that we do in adult literacy intersects with this new digital environment in which we are all living. Because we work in Canada as you do in the United States with adults who are upgrading their literacy and numeracy skills in order to enter the workforce or return to the workforce after an absence or to go on to further education and training and there's another pillar to this which is what we're calling Full Civic Participation. Sometimes you see it described as independence and when we read the Mary McCain work we realized that we had some thinking that we needed to do so we set off on this literature search to see what was going on. And before I really get into it, let me tell you that in the United States you have a lot more work going on than we do in Canada or at least it's a lot more visible. So we are indebted to you.

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Marian you were going to speak to, I think, some of these slides which tell us something about the world that we are now living in.

**Marian:** Yes I was. When we looked through the slides we thought 'well, we'll add a few pieces of data about the U.S.' So this information just reflects that we are more and more online, all of us, not just one segment of the population, or one ethnic group, but that everybody's getting more and more online and the Obama administration has a goal of 98% coverage with fast Wi-Fi in the, I don't know how near future, but in the future that's the goal. Even families that are making less than \$30,000 a year, 63% of those families are online at this point.

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And many people who are online are using some kind of social network, Facebook or MySpace or there are lots of other ones, so I just wondered how many of you have a Facebook page? If you would just use your status to give me a green check if you have a Facebook page. I thought it would be interesting to see that. (Speaker reviews Attendee List window) Thank you. So a number of us have a Facebook page.

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So as far as delivering instruction or communicating with learners online, that's more and more of a possibility. And then the other thing that we have that's changing rapidly is cell phones. 85% of American adults own a cell phone or a smart phone. A smart phone is a phone that you can get on the internet with. So I think we are finding that more and more of our learners have like a little computer in their pocket and can go online and look up information. More African-American and Latino than white own cell phones and actually use more features than white cell phone owners do. And but many, most people send and receive text messages. That is just something that is important for us to know. 22% of those who are online used social networking or something like Twitter for politics. So that's just kind of amazing because Twitter didn't even exist a few years ago. And the way the iPad's sold when they came out was also phenomenal so it just supports that quote from Mary McCain that digital skills are really important to participate in our civic life these days. Maria, back to you.

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**Maria:** Thank you very much Marian and I think it's safe to say that the figures for Canada are comparable. The figures, which are 2009 figures from Statistics Canada show 75% of Canadians have used the internet or are using it. We have about 5 million Canadians who use Twitter. That's 14.6% of our population and 80% of Canadians, oh I said that, have used the internet. So I think, I'm not so worked up about the platforms or the gadgets. I mean it's very interesting but I'm not talking about them in order to focus on those, it's just sort of for us to remember that the use of the internet, the use of digital technologies is now just a main stream activity and one little question that constantly pops into my head when I see those figures is 'well if 80% of Canadians, or close to 80% of Canadians, are using the internet is it possible that none of those people are the people who come into our adult literacy programs?' I doubt it. If all of those cell phones, smart phone and iPad's are being purchased in the United States and in Canada, I'd like to know if adult literacy students have those devices, are using those devices and that's another piece of work that we will come back to later, but one that constantly intrigues me.

In Canada, as in the United States, we know that what are, I think you guys call them is ICT's, we have a slightly more tangled terminology in Canada and we'll get to that later, but Information and Communications Technologies are now essential to many jobs. The Bureau of Labor Statistics in the U.S. is saying that by 2016 70% of jobs will require these skills. And as I said earlier, we are in the business of helping people who want to get back into the workforce, who want to progress in the workforce or who want to go on to further education and training so, again, I think it's a pretty important topic for us to look at carefully.

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Ok, I'm going to move on now. And this is what we are actually going to talk about today. That was just setting the stage for why we're talking about it I guess. I'm going to talk about this it review that we've been working on and Matthias is going to talk about the development of the Digital Technology Competency.

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Now we set out to do this literature review because we were sparked to try to think more carefully about e-learning, about Information and Communications Technologies and you'll see a lovely other little acronym there which is Information Learning Technologies. We really tried to pitch this because we think it covers a much broader ground but unfortunately I think the uptake is very small so I think we are backing away from that. But we wanted to sort out the terminology for that very reason because somebody has described it somewhere as a cacophony of terminology. You hear about e-learning, online learning, distance learning, hybrid learning, synchronous learning, asynchronous learning and on and on it goes and I don't think there is one term that covers everything but we wanted to look at what terminology is being used where to describe what. We wanted to take a look at what the use of Information Communications Technologies could mean for learning and teaching in Adult Basic Education or adult literacy. We knew that we weren't going to find a great deal of material coming out of the adult literacy field so we wanted to look at other education sectors and to try to synthesize some of those findings and, you know, contextualize them to ABE, help to make sense of them in the context

of ABE or Adult Basic Education. And critically we wanted to take a first stab at looking at where the research gaps are so that we can begin to figure out what needs to be looked at/learned and what are the actual opportunities that Digital Technologies and E-Learning offer in adult literacy and what are the challenges that students and instructors are facing. Ok, I hope I'm not going too fast. I mean just tell me to slow down. I have a tend to ramble on.

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And of course one of the first things we found is that there is very little research on the current stage of the use of whatever you call them; Information Communication Technologies, Information Learning Technologies, E-Learning Technologies in Adult Basic Education in Canada. We just don't have very much and at AlphaPlus we believe there's an urgent need to look at e-learning and digital technologies, etc., etc., grounded in our own literacy programs. We also believe there is an urgent need for us to look at what Canadian students, that is to say adult students, and the instructors they work with, what they know, how they use digital technologies, what they want in terms of technologies in their learning environments and what they need and so we hope to, that this lit review will be like just the first baby step in trying to get this going because if we don't document our own practice, I think it just won't get documented and, I don't know, you seem to be slightly better at it in the U.S., we don't seem to be that great at it in Canada. I mean, I think a lot of great research goes on in programs, there's a lot of informal information exchange, but we don't document our practice or at least our documentation is not visible and we need to work on that.

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Ok, this is very small. I hope everybody can see it. This is where we get into a bit of a tangle with our terminology and so what we tried to do was sort of sort out some of the main terms that are used and the first one, as I said, is this ICT, Information Communications Technology. The second one is E-Learning and this is being used more and more in Ontario, anyway, as an umbrella term which is sort of covering everything that people are doing around digital technology. I just don't know if it's a good enough term, if it's going to capture everything, but it's kind of become a shorthand. And then Blended Learning where you're combining face-to-face instruction and online instruction in some way, and this is our term that we tried to pitch, as I say, but I don't think it's going to work. Information and Learning Technology or Technology-Enhanced Learning and these are terms that came from the United Kingdom from an organization called BECTA, that did a great deal of work over about 10 years, mainly in our K-12 sector but they also did some work in adult learning. That organization unfortunately is now no longer in existence. As soon as there was a new government in England BECTA disappeared but some of their work still remains and we've drawn on it quite heavily.

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The first thing that we learned, I would say, is that digital technologies or e-learning, really have the potential to increase access to learning opportunities and increase flexibility for students and I think that's something we all know. I think students often face problems of transportation, childcare, timing – if they're at work or if they have other activities in their lives.

The second really exciting potential of e-learning and digital technologies, I think, is to provide students with the means to acquire or enhance their digital skills so that they are ready to enter or advance in the workforce or to take part in further education and training and also to participate fully in what we have earlier sort of eluded to as this main stream digital world.

There's also the question of younger learners who come into programs and, here you see them described as millennials, I'm never sure what that means. I don't know what that would make me. But younger students who are more comfortable, perhaps, in a digital environment or take it for granted and to come into a program and not to have access to the devices or to the digital technologies that they take for granted, is perhaps not such a great idea.

And then there's the potential also to de-institutionalize. That is to work with students to support their personal learning, their self direction, their independence as learners. I think a lot of that is perhaps, you know, slightly, well, maybe it's a little threatening, but I think when we talk about de-institutionalization we're not talking about taking down buildings or closing programs but we're talking about offering students another arena in which they can work on the skills that they're wanting to enhance.

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You know the whole idea of anywhere/anytime participation, and as I'm thinking about this and reading about it, yeah, there's an opportunity we found and the literature bares it out, to have anywhere/anytime attachment to learning, but it's not that we're going to, you know, it's not what it seems. Behind the curtain there is a tremendous amount of work to be done by programs and by instructors to make this possible.

There is evidence, though, that shows that adult literacy students who have the opportunity to engage in online learning do show significant gains and they also show significant enhancement in self-confidence, in self-direction, independence, which again sort of loops back and helps with the whole learning cycle.

Many of the students that we support in programs have not had tremendous success within traditional school systems or they're uncomfortable because they're expecting to have the same lack of success and I think one of the opportunities that e-learning, online learning offers is for students to go at it in a different way and I think that's probably pretty important.

A lot of this work has been very well documented by Heidi Silver-Pacuilla from the American Institutes of Research, and of course coming out of the longitudinal study in Oregon, directed I think by Stephen Reder.

There is also quite a lot of evidence, and compelling evidence that assistive technology helps students who have learning disabilities. It provides them with what's called, you know, a Multi-Modal approach; that is they have many opportunities to work with material and they also have the opportunity to develop digital skills while they are working on their literacy and numeracy skills. And again, I'm indebted to Heidi Silver-Pacuilla's work in this area and I think many, many programs use assistive technology already. Her argument, which I find quite compelling is that we need to know more about

what works and why and we need to involve students in the research as we move forward so that we have a clearer picture of what's working.

There's also an opportunity I think for collaborative learning and in workplaces, this is a very, very important skill, to be able to work in teams, to learn together, and I think that online programming offers students that opportunity in a very exciting way. I keep saying 'I think' but these are all things I have learned from other people.

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Of course what does it mean? It means that we need to rethink our assumptions about delivery. We need to think about other possibilities and I think, there's a very lively discussion going on right now on what I still call the NIFL DL and Tech List about face-to-face and online learning and so I think what we're talking about when we're talking about rethinking assumptions is to look at models that blend the two.

We also know from research, and again, I'm indebted to Heidi Silver-Pacuilla and Stephen Reder, that learners, even those at the very lowest learning level, can participate and succeed in online learning. And in a conversation I had not too long ago with Heidi, we were discussing the fact that there's hardly a job left where you don't have to use some kind of online device, some kind of digital device. And so the way in which people acquire those skills is a bit of a mystery and we need to understand it better.

We also know that the blended learning approach that I talked about a little while ago, that is the combination of face-to-face instruction and online. There's evidence to show that that works best. So we're not talking about an either/or situation.

And I think that what we are calling here Information Learning Technologies, but I'm going to drive you crazy because I'm driving myself crazy with all this terminology, offers many opportunities for new models of teaching. What do we mean by that? It means that we're offering opportunities for instructors to deliver their content in different ways and for students to interact with that content in different ways. But that raises a very big question. As we said earlier about the myth of anywhere/anytime learning, there are many challenges. This just doesn't happen on its own and one of the areas that we tried to focus on in this lit review was 'what's happening to support instructors to integrate technology in their practice so they can do what they want to do and what they need to do in relation to digital technologies?'

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Ok. Here we go. These are some of the challenges I think, the beginning of the challenges. There's this phenomenon called the second digital divide. The first digital divide was when people didn't have access to hardware or software. I think, as we saw earlier when we looked at the figures for what marketers called the penetration of the internet and technologies in our lives that that's still an issue for sure, but a second divide has opened. It incorporates access but it also means exposure to technology. The more exposure you have, the research is showing obviously the better your skills will be but also the better your literacy skills will be. The higher your literacy level is the more you will use technology. So we need to think about that digital divide when we're thinking about online programming.

We need to know a great deal more about how to assess and evaluate this kind of learning. We just don't have, at least in Canada and I haven't, to tell you the truth, found a tremendous amount in the U.S. or in Australia or New Zealand or the U.K. but we need to think carefully about assessment and evaluation.

We need to think to, I mean you hear a lot and I've read a lot about what are called 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, particularly in the K-12 sector and I think that this is something that we need to start thinking about in our own practice as adult literacy practitioners. And then what is our role in helping people to develop these skills, and again that brings us back to if we do have a role and I suspect we do, then how do we support instructors to do the work that they need to do? And one of the things we need to ask ourselves I think is, is digital literacy a fundamental skill or a basic skill and if it is, how does it fit in the kind of work that we're doing in our programs?

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And this is just kind of an overview. Yes there are all kinds of benefits and opportunities but how are instructors to be supported? What kind of professional development and training do they need and what works so that they can effectively integrate technology in their practice? And I think that's a huge conundrum and I did find quite a lot of material, not from the adult literacy sector, but from the K-12 sector that tries to address that. So here it goes.

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The first thing I learned: that skills training is not enough. It's not enough to just show people a tool or a platform or a gadget and say 'well here, figure out how to use this.' Instructors benefit when they get a chance to see concrete examples of technology in use and technology that's very attached to their own practice. That is to say effective professional development, the literature tells us, should be instructor centered rather than Techno centric. And I think, you know, I've been around this area for a long time, and I think at the beginning and even now at times we have a tendency to focus more on tools than we do on the instructor and I don't think that works and the literature bares that out.

Instructors have a great deal of experience and they themselves have learning styles, they have levels of familiarity and comfort with technology and their values, as educators, are critically important. And all of these things have to be factored in when we are going to plan professional development that works. And I don't think it's something that in our field, in adult literacy, we've had a great deal of time to do, but I think it's important if in fact we want to move forward.

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The first thing that instructors need to know, I guess, is how all of this technology is going to benefit their students or is it just going to be, you know, kind of a waste of their students time. And in order to figure that out they need time to experiment and the freedom to take risks. And I know that you're probably all laughing. I'm surprised I haven't had a whole bunch of laughter already at the very suggestion that practitioners would get time and freedom, but that aside, that's what seems to work. And that they need the opportunity to have positive experiences to see, (Speaker checks Attendee List

box), oh I see a smile...that's good...to have positive experiences so that they can see, they can develop a sense of self-mastery around the technology to start with and then be able to see more clearly how it's going to work with their practice.

In effective professional development it can't just be a one way street either. We can't just deliver it and then say 'look its good. Use it.' We have to encourage critical feedback. We have to encourage practitioners and instructors to talk to each other and to figure this out.

The concept of Continuing Professional Development I learned about from the United Kingdom. It's a model of professional development that that organization I mentioned earlier, BECTA, promoted and it really is a sort of iterative process of professional development. It's not a whole bunch of one opts but it's giving people the opportunity to go back, review what they've learned, play with what they've learned, come back, build on what they've learned, and I think sometimes in the adult literacy field, especially here in Canada, the way we're funded doesn't always support that kind of professional development. We tend to do things, really, year-by-year and I think that that's not as useful and it's not making the best use of our resources.

The other issue that comes up again and again in the literature around effective professional development is the necessity to allow real opportunities for instructors to network with each other and to share and learn from one another. And the model that's often cited is Communities of Practice. But those again, that doesn't happen all by itself. It needs to be set up. It needs to be well moderated. People need to have time to participate and it needs to be supportive. So again, this is an area that we need to explore more carefully.

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Now we do know one thing about Canadian adult literacy practitioners. They are very enthusiastic about online learning. I don't know how well any of you know Canada but it's big and although most of us live along the border with you guys, a lot of people don't. There's always a distance issue and there's always an issue of cost for attending professional development sessions. You probably have the same issue in the United States. Time away from your program is time away from your program and you often, it's difficult to get replaced and there are big costs associated with it. So from that point of view they are very enthusiastic about professional development.

Now there's a great organization here in Ontario called the Community Literacy of Ontario. It's an organization, an umbrella organization for community based programs, and they partnered with Athabasca University which is a big online university here in Canada and did a project called GO Online where they went and surveyed adult literacy folks, instructors, about their perceptions of online learning for professional development and that's where this very, very strong data that shows that they support it very much came out of. They did a little bit of training with practitioners about using online professional development and of course that was a 2 year project. It's now ended. Some of the materials are available online, but in my view we need to go back, revisit that, figure out where we can go next because if people are ready and willing to do online professional development we need to

squarely face the barriers and challenges they have in doing that and try to find ways to knock them down.

Again, these online communities of practice, these ways of bringing people together so that they can share their questions, their learning, their explorations, are critically important. And again, they require real support that is beyond just 'yes, this is a good idea'. I mean people have to have the time and the means to work on these things together as professionals.

Now I'm lost. I've lost my notes. It's okay. The possible professional development models – that line here, again it goes back to that idea that professional development that takes place in little isolated pieces, I mean, we are very glad of it but it's not as effective as if we try to develop a model where it's a more iterative process. The other thing that we need to be doing I think are things like this webinar where we're coming together online and learning a little bit, going away, having time to think about it and figure out what we can do with it. I mean, to hear me talk about this is not much use to you unless you can somehow take away something from it that will help you in your practice.

The other thing we really need to work on is evaluating the effectiveness of our professional development and we need to really work hard on that so that we're developing quality professional development in this field.

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I'm going to speed up because I have a feeling I'm getting kind of long-winded. Ok, this is my last slide. So here are some of the ideas that are coming out of this lit review and there are many more and I'm very happy to share the lit review with you. It will be out and about in April, online in PDF and I invite you to come on to our AlphaPlus blog, you can find us just by Googling AlphaPlus blog or go to our website, [alphaplus.ca](http://alphaplus.ca) and click on blog, and I'm going to post pieces of it starting in April.

What we're learning is that we need to share information, we need to document our practice, and we need to do it for each other and with each other.

In Canada we need to come up with some kind of National Consortium so that we're talking to each other from coast to coast to coast. I think in the United States you have some great organizations like OTAN that make that more possible. We need to work on that a little bit in Canada.

And this last one I meant sort of as a joke but I think the first and fundamental thing is let us give adult literacy instructors the tools they need to do the job that we expect them to do and I think it would be great if you came into a program and the very first thing you got was a fully loaded laptop and then you got time to work with technology.

So that's my little spiel for the day. And I think it's over now to Matthias.

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**Matthias Sturm:** Hello everybody. Can everybody hear me? A check mark would be great if you can do that for me. Excellent, thank you. Thanks Maria. Well as always it's a hard, tough act to follow, but I will do my best.

It fits in nicely. These are two separate projects that we wanted to talk to you about but it fits in nicely, they are connected in some way and Maria has also worked on the part that I'm talking to you about.

The Digital Technology Competency Development which has been on the agenda of the government of Ontario for some time, now and Digital Skills have been on the agenda of the government in Canada for the last couple of years so that's kind of been on the mind of everybody. Even some time ago, I'm not really sure how long it's been around, but Canada, the Canadian federal government embarked on a project, on a big project called the Essential Skills. It's a research project trying to evaluate the key competencies of jobs, what's needed to perform a job and those kinds of things. And that was done, I think it was done like over 15 years ago or something like that. I'm not completely sure. And a lot of what came out of that has informed other development around Canada in work place skills, work place training and assessment and those developments often refer to the Essential Skills or elaborate on them.

More recently in Ontario, over the last couple of years or so, the Province of Ontario, the government of Ontario has been involved and involved the field in creating an adult literacy curriculum framework which is a competency-based framework. It hasn't been released yet but we have been privy to see some of it and work on the technology competency part of that curriculum framework and it's in line with the Essential Skills and the IALS skills, the International, gee now I'm stumped on the acronym, the International Adult Literacy Survey. There we go. I am sure you are familiar with that one.

So I'll give you a quick overview of that project and then see where that goes. There were a couple of polls in the beginning. If you haven't had a chance to fill those out, let me pull up the first one and then we can talk about that.

\*Pulled up Poll results over slide\*

If you can't see the poll just give me an X and if you can, if you haven't contributed to the poll if you want to take 30 seconds and do that now you can see the results building up on the right.

As you saw on the slide before we first differentiated between the use of technology and then the use of digital technology part of that was because we realized that what was out there was technology often referred to the use of technology in the classroom for learning, mainly the use of computers and we also wanted to include digital devices that are commonly used in the work place so the things like keypads, things that couriers often use to sign off on deliveries, those kinds of things. So it's kind of interesting to see that *Operate digital devices* is really high on your priority list and of course managing digital files and records, that's not a surprise. And also the managing digital access, security and privacy is becoming more and more important. I'm not surprised about the *Install hardware* being low and also a little bit lower than *Install, add & run software*. Often that's done through an administrative thing but often,

especially in online learning, learners are sometimes required to add a plug-in or something like that so that becomes more and more important and connectivity issues. That's great.

There was a second poll which I will pull up that was accessible right there in the beginning, so let me take, maybe I can do both and pull this to the side and pull up this one. If you can take another 30 seconds, if you haven't had a chance to do that in the lobby when you first were waiting for the meeting to start. The reasons why this is poll number 3 is because there is a poll number 2 still coming a little bit later. So this one is trying to get at if your learners use digital technologies when they're doing other tasks. The competencies listed here are in line with what we're working here today. I hope they make sense to you. And they are still under development. I think even now they've changed a little bit. Great. Yeah, that's interesting too. That's a nice spread overall. Thanks very much for doing that.

If you have any comments to share feel free to use the chat box. I try to keep my eye on it. It's a little bit hard to do everything at the same time but I will try my best.

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This seems a little bit like a small slide. So we started, as I eluded before, we started using the Essential Skills Computer Use Competency that was developed 15 years ago or so. If you'd like more information on the Essential Skills I will put the link in the chat box. There you go. You can read up on that a little bit. (Speaker is reading comment in chat box) Yes and that's a good point, thanks Penny. So use the Full Screen button if the text is too small.

The Essential Skills Computer Use is defined as computer use is the ability to use computers and other electronic equipment; for example fax machine, calculators, automated bank machines. The importance of strong computer use skills continues to grow as it becomes increasingly dependent on technology to carry out our work and daily activities. So if you think about the context of the early 90's, that was a good description, but its seriously outdated so that was one of our first, kind of our first tasks in this project to look at what's there, not only the essential skills, also other things. We did a scan of literature review, a scan of literature and framework resources about technology skills in the U.S., in the United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia and New Zealand just to see what is being done in other jurisdictions.

We also looked at the skill levels, computer lists, and computer use self-assessment of the Ontario Skills Passport which is another project that was done years ago here in Ontario and intake modules of LearnToLearn which is a program that's widely used in Ontario as well. Out of that we kind of determined that the Essential Skills Computer Use is too narrowly defined and out-of-date like I said before. So those things were kind of our basis to move forward. We worked with a consulting firm who had initially worked on the Essential Skills profiles on that research project. So we had experience with that and also was engaged in working with the curriculum framework at the time. So that was a very good team. Like I said before, Maria was a part of that team as well. We will go on to the next slide.

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There were several steps involved in doing that work. The first thing was, the first step was collecting, collecting common tasks. We did that in collaboration with literacy programs in the 4 streams in

Ontario. Literacy in Ontario is divided into 4 streams; English speaking, French speaking, a Native Culture stream which can be English speaking or it can be an aboriginal language, just depending, that can differ from one community to the next depending on what the Band Council has decided, and the last string is American Sign Language which is also considered here a Culture-based stream and of course, it's the Deaf stream. Sorry, the stream is the Deaf stream which is considered a Culture-based stream. Part of that is a language issue with American Sign Language and other parts are culture related activity.

We identified in the task sorting, so we engaged in task sorting to see if tasks fell into specific groups, technology related tasks, and we realized there were tasks that had, either belonged to 1 or 2 groups, other than that they were about specific things. One of those groups were that they had a discrete set of skills, often related to occupational skills and the other one, the other tasks seem to be more like tasks of a foundational/enabling skills, performing tasks within other competencies that then use technology as a medium. So let's say, for example, filling out a document on paper in print or filling it out online. The content of the document is the same but the way to go about it to fill it out; the way to make sense of it is completely different. We were debating at the time if it would make more sense to address those kinds of things in the other competencies since the content is the same and the task is the same, which is filling out a document, or to keep that separate. To us it seemed it would belong into another competency but we also wanted to be mindful of making that connection and drawing connections between the competencies for that purpose.

The next step was the development of task groups. Once we figured out the task sorting, and there was a lot of moving back and forth between them as new tasks came in and task groups got formed and the task examples were sorted into those groups and sometimes groups were merged and others emerged. Then there was a stage of the review of the tasks groups to see if there was a natural connection to task groups in other competencies to validate that initial sense that we had and to also to see if it was a technology skill of what we then labeled that had some kind of a transitional value in enabling learners to use technologies with the same ease and effectiveness as print-based materials. What we meant by that was that there might be technology activities that don't come naturally today but eventually will become more natural and then maybe fall away as a skill that has to be taught overtly, just like holding a pen doesn't have to be, in most cases, taught overtly but it's more of an assumed skill that you need to do writing.

Oh I see Penny is giving me the warning. Thank you. So there's a little bit left. Let me move on.

\*Slide 23\*

The last step or one of the later steps in that process is a task scaling with reference to task complexity. It's a complicated process that considers various elements as you can see here on the slide and we haven't done that process to date all the way through. We've done it with task examples to validate the scale that we have developed.

The next slide is an image. I'll explain it quickly. It's a little bit overwhelming.

\*Slide 24\*

What you see here is what I talked about before. One the left-hand side are the competencies. The other competencies, the non-technology related ones that we are trying to make connections to that possibly have connections in them to the technology competencies and the other part is the technology competency that we developed at the time. At the time we did it to support the curriculum development but we also kept on eye on what it could mean for updating that Essential Skills Computer Use scale and bring that into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. So the third poll relates a little bit to that so I'll pull that up and maybe you can participate in that. That would be great.

This poll wasn't up in the beginning because it didn't really make a lot of sense to provide that to you upfront.

\*Pulled up Poll results over slide\*

If you can see the poll and you...yup, I can see that coming up. That's fantastic. Great. Great! Well *Find and use information*, that's not surprising. We found the same thing here. That's definitely one of the biggest competencies and *Communicating ideas & information* is as well. *Self-direct; Act autonomously* is definitely for online blended learning, whatever you want to call it, is right on top of the list. That's great. I think in the interest of time I'll stop here and I'll go through the chat and see if there's another question while Penny is going to pull up some files for you to download. Thanks very much everybody!

**Penny:** Thank you! I'm going to switch the screen and kind of walk you through downloading some files that we have for you so hang on. You'll see the screen has changed a little bit and down in the lower right-hand corner are files that you can simply click on the title of the name of the file and then you'll see a button available called 'save to my computer'. You will need to follow the prompts given to you by your browser. Firefox does it a little bit differently than Internet Explorer as does it differently from Safari so you might need to look at your task pane or your task bar on an IBM or Windows PC. You might need to look at your Dock if you're on a Mac and then it will just take a few moments to download these files so we will give you a chance to do that while Matthias looks at these questions and Maria as well. And remember if you do have questions, please post them in the Chat Pod and let me know if you are having any difficulty with the downloads as well. Matthias I will let you have the mic back.

**Matthias:** Thanks very much. Yeah I'm just going through the questions here in the chat so feel free to post any or to repost if I've missed it. I'm going back up the list but feel free to repost if I've missed something please. Any comments, any questions that you may have for myself, or for Maria for that matter.

\*Slide 25\*

\*Slide 26\*

**Marian:** So Matthias, this is Marian. Can I ask a question?

**Matthias:** Yes, go ahead please Marian.

**Marian:** So at the end of this project you're going to have a detailed list of kind of like competencies, digital competencies? Is that going to be the product?

**Matthias:** Yes, yes that is a part of the product. It's a little bit more complicated because we were engaged at that earlier stages of that development for the curriculum and then it kind of took on a different development and at the moment we're trying to figure out who on the one hand to present the work because I think it's interesting work and we kind of want to see what people think about it. But also because we can see those kind of two avenues, either an application for curriculum development, either here in Ontario or anywhere else for that matter, or to compare it to other developments but also in the sense of working with things like the Essential Skills, which are not directly related to our curriculum, but I often drawn on in terms of developing training or assessment or that kind of thing in Canada anyways. So in the sense, yes, the final product is that kind of framework of those competencies, but as a final product of how it could be applied, that could take various shapes and forms I would think. Does that answer your question?

**Marian:** Yes, Thank you. We'll take one more question and then we are going to close. So Lyndon has a question about finding out how other teachers have implemented technologies in their teaching. Could you give any guidance as to where to find web sites where teachers share this type of information?

**Matthias:** Yes Lyndon. Maybe Maria could answer this one.

**Maria:** Yeah, in the adult literacy sector there are some. I don't have the URL's right in my head or on paper but I'd be very happy to pass them along to Marian and/or Penny and then they could be made available to people. You know there's a lot in the K-12 sector. There's not that much in the adult literacy sector but I can, well...yeah, Nancy Friday who is my colleague and my next door neighbor here at AlphaPlus says the NIFL Technology Forums. I mean the DL and Tech List is my number one go to place. There are also some great blogs. I'm just going to do a little blog rolling here. Go to our AlphaPlus blog and we often link to those blogs and we often talk about things we found on those blogs. But I would be very happy to put together a short list and make it available to Marian and Penny to share with this group.

**Marian:** Thanks Maria and thanks Matthias. This has been really interesting. And thanks to all of you who attended. We are going to close the meeting now. One person asked about the recording. It takes a little while to get the recording posted on our Web site but it will be posted on the OTAN Web site under Teaching Tools and Resources. When you go to Distance Learning there is a place for Distance Learning Forum and this webinar is part of our Distance Learning Forum that's an ongoing series of webinars.

So thank you very much for attending and look for that. Probably next week that recording will be posted.

\*End\*