Does technology serve to liberate EAP practitioners, or does it enslave us?

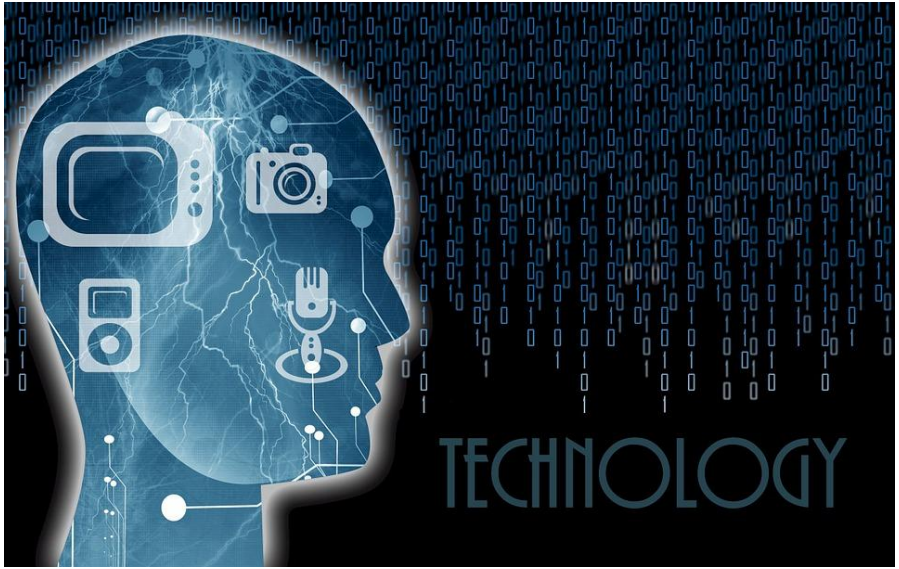
Language Centre CPD Day. 2018.

When we can't think for ourselves, we can always quote

— Ludwig Wittgenstein —

AZ QUOTES

Let’s define our terms in context



Conceptions of liberty (Isaiah Berlin, 1969)

Negative Liberty

The absence of constraints, barriers and obstacles.

Positive Liberty

The presence of such things as self-control, self-determination, self-mastery, self-realisation.

So, in what ways does technology constrain or enable our practices, and those of our students?

Liberty and technology

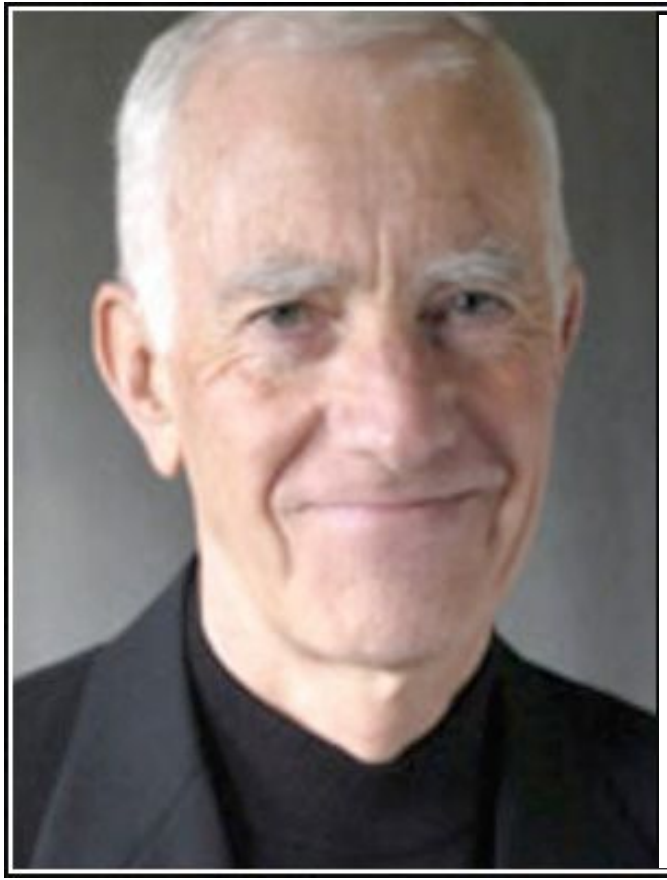
‘Freedom should not be seen as a liberation from technology, but rather as a process of consciously attaching ourselves to technologies. It exists in caring for the quality of our interactions and fusions with technology.’

(Verbeek 2011, 156)

So, questions we might consider:

- In what ways do we adapt our EAP practices (pedagogy, materials, research programmes) to the technologies we encounter?
- And, vice-versa, in what ways do we adapt the technologies we encounter to our EAP practices?
- What responsibilities do we and our learners have, concerning the technologies that we and they choose to use?

Used by:	**Technology:** - hardware/device - software/application	**Uses:** e.g., instruction, class management, knowing about students, subject knowledge	**Effects ...** … on my practice … on my learners
Me			
My students			



“Curiosity, the eagerness to inquire and find out, was crucial in a Neolithic setting, and it was constrained before cyberspace. You had to wait for the paper, go to the library, or attend a concert to find out what was out there. Cyberspace eutrophicates curiosity; it provides too many nutrients everywhere and all the time. Curiosity, as a result, becomes restless and shapeless.”

(Borgmann, 2007, p. 4)

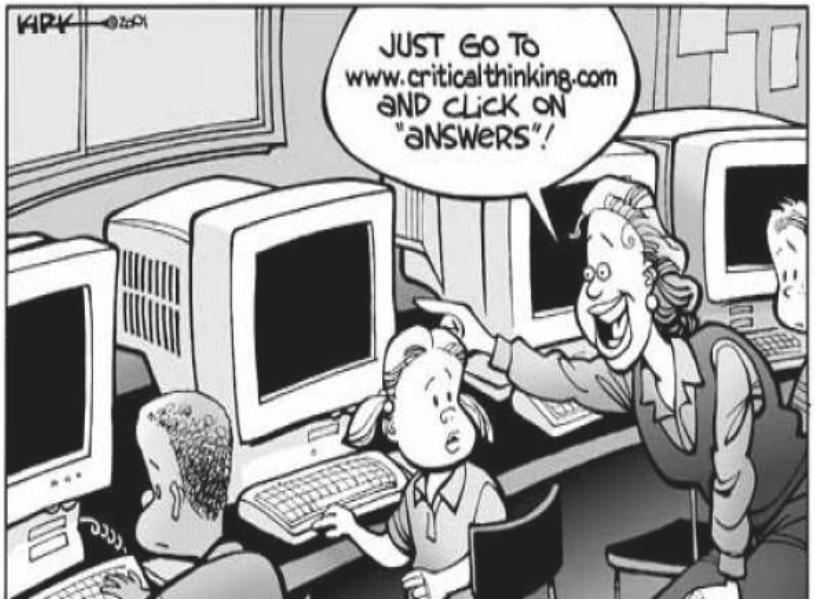
The Inforgs inhabit the infosphere

> “In many respects, we are not standalone entities, but rather interconnected informational organisms or inforgs, sharing with biological agents and engineered artefacts a global environment ultimately made of information, the infosphere.”

(Floridi, 2010: 13)

Information technology and student inforgs

1. What do you understand by the term ‘information literacy’?

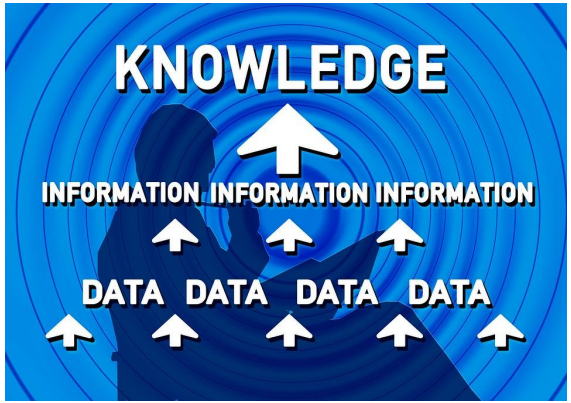


Information literacy is knowing how to:

- Define and articulate the need for information,
- Identify a variety of types and formats of potential sources of information,
- Reevaluate the nature and extent of the information needed,
- Select and search databases, constructing and implementing an effective search strategy,
- Evaluate retrieved materials - define formats for storage of information, identify appropriate information resources and references within the discipline.
- Organize and manipulate the information retrieved - choose a communication medium, applications, and tools.
- Incorporate selected information into their knowledge base.

(Association of College and Research Libraries 2000, 3).

Students need to transform data into knowledge



- We work, share, and search at the data level as opposed to the level of conclusions, narratives, catalogs, or indices;
- Students need to know how to find, evaluate, and contextualize information in numerous different formats on interdisciplinary topics;
- They need to know how to locate and use the underlying data as well as the technology to sort and present it;
- Reading a book or listening to a lecture is no longer sufficient.

(Simon, 2015)

Information technology and student inforgs

2. What might be the gains and losses for students in accessing the information they need online?

Search engines exert epistemic power

Google Scholar

"Search engines are major points of entrance and specific search engines … function as "obligatory passage points" (Callon 1986), exerting tremendous amount of … epistemic power."

This power "is the result of collective socio-technical epistemic practices in which we all are involved."

(Simon, J. , 2015)

Electronic Postmodernity: Reading for EAP?

The gains for individuals:

(a) an increased awareness of the "big picture," a global perspective that admits the extraordinary complexity of interrelations;
(b) an expanded neural capacity, an ability to accommodate a broad range of stimuli simultaneously;
(c) a relativistic comprehension of situations that promotes the erosion of old biases and often expresses itself as tolerance; and
(d) a matter-of-fact and unencumbered sort of readiness, a willingness to try new situations and arrangements.

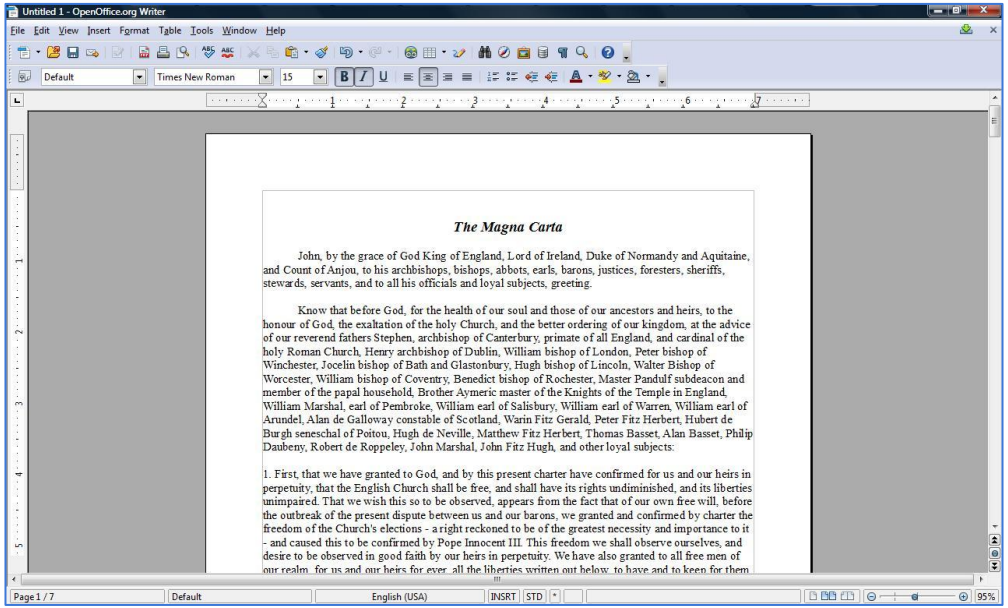
The losses:

(a) a fragmented sense of time and a loss of the so-called duration of experience, that depth phenomenon we associate with reverie;
(b) a reduced attention span and a general impatience with sustained inquiry;
(c) a shattered faith in institutions and in the explanatory narratives that formerly gave shape to subjective experience;
(d) a divorce from the past, from a vital sense of history as a cumulative or organic process; and
(e) an estrangement from geographic place and community;
(f) an absence of any strong vision of a personal or collective future.

(Birkerts 1994: 27, cited by Cooper 2004: 94-95)

Information technology and student inforgs

3. What are the effects on student writing of use of word processing?



Word Processing

- Writing is not fixed or indelible - it is provisional.
- It is less consequential - no physical reminder of the wrong turn, the failure.
- It promotes process over product.
- It favors the whole over the execution of the part.
- Copy/paste/move/insert affects writer's sense of linkage and necessity.
- Less thought given to the ideal of inevitable expression.
- Writer accepts variability - more inclined to view work as a version.
- Limitations of pen and paper/typewriter encourage resistance to spewing out unformulated expressions - responsibility has now passed to the writer.
- To be a consummate fabricator of phrases and sentences one must work against the grain of the technology.

(Birketts, 1994)

Information technology and student inforgs

4.

i) Are the influences of Grammarly, paraphrasing tools, Google Translate and Essay Writing websites, positive or negative?

ii) Do they constrain or enable those making use of them?

grammarly

FOR?

It picks up errors on the micro-level, and gives an explanation of the problem.

Some students use it … if all students use it they will be on a more level playing field … it is not perfect - students need to be aware of this.

If students' more basic errors are picked up by software … teachers have more scope to give feedback on higher level aspects, e.g., coherence and the development of arguments.

(Chris Smith, BALEAP JISCMAIL, 19/03/18)

AGAINST?

My student couldn't work out what was so bad about his writing - Grammarly had completely mangled up his work.

It could make no meaning of a technical subject … it had chopped the technical noun phrases to pieces, as it confused verbs and nouns.

(Jenifer Spencer, BALEAP JISCMAIL, 15/03/18)

Translate and Submit

Talk to the phone

Students have **apps** they talk into that translate the utterances to me in English - they want me to reply *to the phone* which then translates it back…. I think we need to pick our battles!

(Emma Lay, BALEAP JISCMAIL, 15/03/18)

Google Translate and Turnitin

Google Translate turns text into comprehensible English.

Students find texts in L1, translate through Google, then submit that text in their assignments … passing Turnitin submission. Students may be able to pass an assignment by submitting Google-Translated bits of Wikipedia from their L1.

The issue is how to stop the weaker or less-engaged students from cutting corners.

(Chris Smith, BALEAP JISCMAIL, 19/03/18)

A final quote

The 'neo-Luddite' Theodore Roszak remarks, 'we do not bring the full resources of the self to the computer'. Before the PC screen, 'sensual contact, intuition, inarticulated commonsense' must be 'largely ... left out'. … We have already noted, for instance, the narrowing of knowledge and reason to the acquisition and processing of information.

(Cooper, 1995, 7-18)

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	Tools	Examples of use	Reasons
For instruction			
For class management			
To know about students			
For subject knowledge			

Used by:	**Technology:** - hardware/device - software/application	**Uses:** e.g., instruction, class management, knowing about students, subject knowledge	**Effects ...** … on my practice … on my learners
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	Tools	Examples of use	Reasons
For instruction	Word, PPT, Smartboard, VLE/Hub, Google Docs., www: YouTube/Vimeo, Google, UEfAP, AEO, concordancers, corpora and corpus query tools, online dictionaries; camcorders, audio recorders, smartphones? Digital language labs.	lesson preparation; searching for facts, data, images, inspiration, authentic mats., writing lesson plans, handouts etc. Uploading supporting materials, handouts and presentations, authoring quizzes (H5P, QMplus Quizzes),	Easy of use, meets st. expectations, clarity and effectiveness of presentations; encourage data-informed learning. For sts. to review or access later. To provide interactive practice material, to consolidate learning, convenience for teacher and student.
For class management	Lab software, email, MySiS, QMplus	Monitor students, distribute content, check progress, check performance, check time on task. Setting assignments, distributing messages/information	Ease of access, shareability, university requirements.
To know about students	VLE/Hub, email, spreadsheets (attendance, grades, records of work etc.). Assessment: essay submission, marking, (TurnItIn & Grademark). camcorders, audio recorders,	Store and access grades, attendance records; check originality of written work. Capture oral performance.	Automated plagiarism checking, ability to record and review work.
For subject knowledge	Library website, e-Journals, Q-Review?, Google (Scholar), YouTube, Vimeo, TED Talks, specialist websites, email lists,	Locating subject-specific content to adapt for EAP teaching,	Lack of published EAP mat., ensuring lesson content up to date,

List the technologies you/your students use in EAP:

	What?	Examples of use	Why?
Lesson preparation	Word, PPT, Smartboard, VLE/Hub, Library website, Google Docs., www: YouTube/Vimeo, Google, UEfAP, AEO, concordancers, corpora and corpus query tools, online dictionaries	lesson prep: searching for facts, data, images, inspiration, authentic mats., writing lesson plans, handouts etc.	Lack of published mat., data-driven learning, ensuring lesson content up to date, ease of use, meeting st. expectations, clarity and effectiveness of presentations
In class	All of the above, camcorders, audio recorders, smartphones. Digital language labs.	Sts. using mobile devices, language labs, Internet, collaborative writing, brainstorming, live correction.	To bring the world into the classroom, empowering sts. to become autonomous learners,
Outside of class	VLE/Hub, email, spreadsheets (attendance, grades, records of work etc.). Assessment: essay submission, marking, plagiarism checking (TurnItIn & Grademark).	Uploading supporting materials, handouts and presentations, authoring quizzes (H5P, QMplus Quizzes), setting assignments, distributing messages/information	For sts. to review or access later. To provide interactive practice material, to consolidate learning, convenience for teacher and student.