

Further information

A number of support organisations and initiatives in FE and HE have already made progress in promoting staff i-skills and they can provide useful input to any programmes you are planning for your institution.

Training providers

Association for Learning Technologies (ALT)

Workshops and events on handling content for teaching and learning, copyright and so on
www.alt.ac.uk

FERL Practitioners Programme (FPP)

Module G – Covers creating and adapting content for teaching and learning. Module I – Covers different approaches to finding subject-based ILT resources, issues relating to finding, storing and disseminating resources locally in line with current legislation and good practice
www.ferl.becta.org.uk/fpp

The Higher Education Academy (HEA)

The HEA provides discipline-based support for learning and teaching through its Subject Network
www.heacademy.ac.uk

JISC Legal

Free enquiry service, information resources and training events related to legal issues such as Freedom of Information, Copyright and Data Protection
www.jisclegal.ac.uk

JISC Plagiarism Service

Raising awareness of plagiarism in the academic community through advice, online resources, training and an electronic detection service
www.jiscpas.ac.uk

JISC Regional Support Centres

Locally based support for FE staff development in i-skills
www.jisc.ac.uk/index.cfm?name=rsc

National Learning Network

Database of staff development events and resources
www.nln.ac.uk

Netskills

A JISC-supported service providing workshops and materials to support staff and student i-skills
www.netskills.ac.uk

Resource Discovery Network (RDN)

High-quality Internet resources for further and higher education
www.rdn.ac.uk

Resource Discovery Network Virtual Training Suite

Online tutorials and workshops to support staff and student i-skills
www.vts.rdn.ac.uk

Scottish FE Unit (SFEU)

Support staff development through events and knowledge networks
www.sfeu.ac.uk

Examples of i-skills programmes and projects

Supporting New Academic Staff (SNAS)

Teaching resources, materials and training events for new staff in various disciplines
www.heacademy.ac.uk/SNAS.htm

LawPaths

Project to support use of new electronic legal information resources
<http://library.kent.ac.uk/library/lawpaths/default.htm>

Higher Education Academy (HEA)

Survey of student e-literacy training packages
www.ics.ltsn.ac.uk/pub/italics/issue1/stubbings/010.html

SEEK – Sheffield Evidence for Effectiveness and Knowledge

Joint NHS/FE-developed website to support i-skills in evidence-based medicine
www.shef.ac.uk/seek/learntools.htm

JISC Staff Information Skills Set Programme i-skills studies

Big Blue <i>connect</i>	Investigation into the information skills sets of staff working in FE and HE, looking at competencies within different roles and developing a map of i-skills. Manchester Metropolitan University, December 2003 www.library.mmu.ac.uk/bbconnect
Staff Development Provision Study	Study to provide an overview of existing staff development provision for i-skills in FE and HE. Reviewed provision by institutions and support organisations and assessed areas of strengths and weaknesses. ESYS plc, December 2003 www.jisc.ac.uk/cpdresources
Drivers for Staff Development Study	Study to identify the drivers for staff development in HE and FE and explores the implications for development of staff i-skills. HE Consulting, December 2003 www.jisc.ac.uk/cpdresources

Other publications in this series

Publications relating to this area of work are also available:

Please visit www.jisc.ac.uk/cpdresources

The **Staff Information Skills Set** project (SISS) has been established to take forwards JISC's work in the area of i-skills.

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This briefing has been written by Alison Mackenzie of Manchester Metropolitan University on behalf of JISC and produced and edited by Dicky Maidment-Otlet and the JISC Communications and Marketing Team.

This briefing is available in alternative formats which can be found at:
www.jisc.ac.uk/cpdresources

Are you
counting
the cost
of your
rubbish?

Time spent picking your way through unwanted information is time wasted.

Developing your **i-skills** will put an end to the frustration experienced when faced with the seemingly impossible task of identifying suitable, quality information both quickly and effectively.

By mobilising your **i-skills** not only will you benefit, but also your colleagues, your institution and your students.

“Researchers at the University of California, Berkeley, say that the amount of information generated worldwide has increased by 30% each year since 1999... that means 800 megabytes of data, roughly equivalent to 800 books was created for each man, woman and child in 2002”

Macintosh (2003)

The nature and shape of the environment in which staff work is now more complex than ever, and the skills that are needed extend beyond ICT to embrace the analytical and evaluative skills essential to effective information management.

You may not have heard the term ‘**i-skills**’ up to now, but probably terms such as information skills, e-literacy, information literacy, knowledge management and research skills are more familiar. We use the term **i-skills** to encompass all of these.

i-Skills are defined as: **the ability to identify, assess, retrieve, evaluate, adapt, organise and communicate information within an iterative context of review and reflection.**

Why invest in developing i-skills?

Working in a rapidly growing and complex digital environment has increased our dependency on information. But there is increasing evidence that our information skills are not keeping pace in any systematic fashion. We all need help to develop the techniques we use, often unconsciously, to handle information in our daily lives – our **i-skills**.

What can i-skills achieve?

i-Skills can:

- Play a significant part in enhancing excellence in teaching & learning and research
- Positively influence student’s approach to independent learning
- Contribute to an institution’s reputation with quality assurance agencies, external funders, employers and the local community – and perhaps most importantly, its own employees!

Where can you start?

If you’re looking for inspiration and advice on how to progress **i-skills** as an individual, or from a staff development perspective or as a senior manager JISC has published two guides, offering an excellent and practical introduction: **Investing in Staff i-Skills: A strategy for institutional Development** and **Improving Staff i-Skills: An introductory guide**

Or just try our “**Starter for Ten**” – suggestions for your staff **i-skills** development programme or our “**Self Assessment Test**”.

All available from www.jisc.ac.uk/cpdresources

Adding up the benefits of better i-skills

Benefits for the individual member of staff:

- Greater independence, less reliance on others
- Improved access/connection to information to aid the process of research
- Enhanced professional development in the area of research and information skills
- Time saving
- Improved quality of information outputs
- More effective sharing of information



Benefits for the institution:

- More effective use of information across the institution – Duplication reduced. Improved information flow. Improved use of existing resources. Improved return on investment
- Improved research capability
- Better take-up and integration of resources into e-learning and e-research environments
- Enhanced market profile and reputation
- Motivated staff



In turn, the influence on STUDENTS could result in:

- Enhanced employability – Transferability of i-skills to work-based context
- Improved research skills – Ability to retrieve information and interpret it using a variety of media and output formats
- Improved confidence and ability to learn independently
- Increased ability to think critically, interpret information and make informed judgements

Need more information? →