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Literacy is the ability for one to be able to read and understand something before them. Normally when the word “literacy” is used, it refers to being able to read, understand, and write words. But, the word literacy can be used to mean more than being able to read and write. Literacy can be used to describe having knowledge in any area of focus. Being able to utilize technology efficiently could be called being technologically literate while being capable of critical thinking would make one literate in critical thinking by definition.

While conversation on the internet has had little bearing on the way I speak and write formally, it has formed the way that I type when addressing others on the internet and has given me experience in writing across different situations. Speaking on the internet is a very different task than speaking to others in real life. There are many communities on the internet, and also like most communities, each has its own unique way of speaking. There are many different situations that you have to tailor your writing to in order to make your writing more effective.

Each website had its own dialect. The words, sentence structure, and overall attitude of the community varied from site to site. Speakers from a site like 4chan for example tended to use abbreviations and initialisms while also rarely being serious, but this is no surprise seeing as this the nature of the platform and its user base. The biggest influence on the way people speak on 4chan is the fact that everyone posts anonymously which causes people to have lowered inhibitions in general. Don't expect proper spelling, grammar, or manners.

Online gamers similarly abbreviate common words and terms that are commonly used in their circles because less time could be spent communicating with each other and more time on playing and taking objectives or whatever else is relevant in the game. In the game Smite, which is all about team coordination and strategy to destroy your enemy’s bases you could type out “The enemy Bakasura is trying to attack our first tower in the bottom lane” or you could say “Jungle pushing solo lane”. Both sentences mean the same thing in the context of the game but one will cost you less precious time to type out in a game where time is one of your most important resources.

Sites where articles and stories are written like news outlets, fanfic.com, and reddit have more of a serious audience where perfect spelling, punctuation, and a more serious attitude are expected by all in order to aid discussion, debate, and criticism. Reddit being somewhat an exception because of the many communities than meet and mix on the site.

During my time on the internet i've learned how to adapt my speech to the platform that I am using at the time. The first time I had encountered any sort conflict over online speech was during a time when online speech was a new thing to me entirely, and I didnt know the mainstream abbreviations like ‘iirc’ or ‘ikr’. I thought to myself that the others were using some sort of code that I had not known about while everyone else was able to pick up on my unfamiliarity with online speech almost immediately. Things like my writing in full sentences while uncapitalizing my ”I”s and adding periods to the ends of single statements were giveaways.

After having gotten used to the new way of writing for online, I had taken what I had learned to other sites because I had thought that that is how everyone online had spoke. In other circles like discussion boards, news comment sections, and similar places I was often called out because of my mostly improper speech, casual misspellings, and my usage of phrases like “lol” and “idk”. This was when I realized that not everywhere on the internet is the same and that people speak differently on different sites like we do in real life. It was then that I had looked back at all the websites that I had used to go to and looked closer at the way users had spoke online and I started to find differences from website to website. Certain words were used more often than others on some websites while others were looked down upon like curses and the newest slang.

And while most would say that being on the internet wouldn't be able to help you in real live. It has helped expose me to different writing formats that i would not have seen in real life before i would have needed to. Before i've ever been assigned a research paper i've seen enough to get a good grasp on how to write my own and argue my points while supporting them with cited sources (although my first paper had points removed because we were told to use MLA citation without having received an explanation of what exactly what that was and I cited my sources the way it is done in scientific research publications.)

In my third year in Highschool, my english teacher was fond of giving his students more creative assignments. We were told to accomplish a certain task be it creating a horror narrative or telling a romantic tale but he would add a constraint. He would often have us write our assignments in the form of a string of text messages or as a part of a forum discussion with multiple contributors. This class was a large struggle to others who were unfamiliar to the medium that he would require us to write in but having been familiar with most of them gave me a slight advantage over others in my class. Its difficult to create and act out a consumer product commercial for a grade in class in the style of a 1950’s television ad when you've never seen one.

After years of interaction with many different groups of people on many different platforms and websites on the internet, I can say that I have become internet literate. Internet literacy being the vast topic that it is is something that is hard to gauge when you've only seen so much of it. But I feel like i'm at a point that i've seen enough to be able to easily adapt my thinking to any new situation that I come across and to not be daunted by the idea of a new means of exchange.