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**STUDENT AMBASSADORS  
FOR DIGITAL LITERACY  
(SADL):  
EVALUATION & IMPACT  
REPORT 2015/16**

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August 2016

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## Executive Summary

This report evaluates the programme Student Ambassadors for Digital Literacy (SADL) at LSE led by Learning Technology and Innovation (LTI) and LSE Library in 2015/16. SADL was set up to better understand the digital and information literacies that LSE undergraduate students obtain and the ways in which the School can best support them. The programme was launched as a pilot in September 2013, following a review of undergraduate support in 2011 which found that digital literacies equip students with important attitudes, skills and behaviours which enhance their studies, and that they are relevant to the workplace and to their daily lives (Bell et al., 2012). Through running SADL, LTI and the Library can understand more about students' digital skills, how to embed them into the curriculum and offer more relevant support and teaching for all students.

The present report evaluates how the programme has impacted on participating students, academic support staff who have taught on the programme, and the wider influence the programme has had across the LSE. It also reflects on how digital literacies at LSE might be best supported. Our recommendation is that we should build on two of SADL's core values, a) Developing a community of peer mentors interested in, and equipped with digital literacies and b) developing an even greater range of digital literacies amongst LSE undergraduates.

## Introduction

### Literature Review and Definition

Student Ambassadors for Digital Literacy (SADL) started as a year-long pilot project in 2013 funded by the Higher Education Academy (HEA) with 20 undergraduate students from the Departments of Statistics and Social Policy. Its inception came as a response to realising that students need to leave university not only with a degree but as digitally literate; and at least since 2008, 'digitally literate' is a plural concept, i.e. it consists of various interrelated skills and techniques (Lankshear and Knobel, 2008). In 2014 the project was extended to run for a second year and expanded to include the Departments of International Relations and Law. In 2015 the programme was opened up to first year undergraduate applicants from any LSE

department (capped at 50). It is run collaboratively by Learning Technology and Innovation (LTI), LSE Library and the LSE Students' Union (LSESU). The budget for the programme is £3000, and is funded currently by LTI and the Library in an equal portion.

### **What is Digital Literacy and why does it matter?**

The Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC), the UK Education & Skills sector's main body for digital services and solutions, defines digital literacy as 'the capabilities which fit someone for living, learning, and working in a digital society' (Jisc, 2014). The term overlaps and is often confused or conflated with the term "information literacy"; however, information literacy encompasses the ability to find, evaluate, use and manage information, whereas digital literacy, as per the JISC definition, explicitly introduces the sphere of the real world, and digital literacy skills are those that help us all to cope with the real world as it is now and as it may be in the (near) future. JISC are investing considerable efforts into building digital capabilities amongst staff and students in the HE sector. Digital Literacy has also been recognized by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) who set digital literacy and employability as the theme of their institutional reviews in 2015-16 (QAA, 2015). On a national level, SADL is an example of an initiative that could plug the £63 Billion 'digital skills' gap in the UK identified by the government in a recent report to the House of Commons Science and Technology Committee (House of Commons, 2016). Digital literacy also aligns closely with the LSE Education Strategy, helping build critical abilities, making LSE students more employable and supporting the idea of a learning community (LSE, 2015).

### **SADL Programme: Outline and Structure**

SADL is based around four workshops offered to students who apply to join the programme at the start of the academic year. In 2015/16 there were 50 spaces available to first year undergraduates across all departments and recruitment took place during Welcome Week. In addition to the workshops, students attended a welcome event and an end of term celebration. The workshops cover the following topics:

- 1) Finding and evaluating information
- 2) Academic practices: Reading and Research
- 3) Managing and sharing information

#### 4) Managing your digital identity and the digital future.

The team were keen to understand disciplinary differences between students at LSE, so discussions between students from across the disciplines take place in workshops. This approach helps the team understand how better to embed digital and information literacies in the curriculum. SADL also established partnerships between staff and students and explored the role of peer mentoring as a sustainable and scalable way of supporting students in this area. After completing the programme, the students are given the opportunity to apply to be Senior Ambassadors, and these students are employed on hourly rates to support staff and students in planning and running the workshops.

Following the workshops, Student Ambassadors were encouraged to share information among themselves via group discussions around digital literacies. They were also encouraged to share their learning with the wider student population using the SADL blog, Moodle and social media channels (e.g. Facebook). Students who participated in such extra activities such as writing blog posts received £10 Amazon vouchers. The Senior Ambassadors were employed on a contract and paid hourly for the work they did in workshops and to support the programme. Following the evaluation report from 2014/2015, the team introduced additional elements in 2015/2016:

- A larger cohort: the team recruited 40 student ambassadors from across all LSE departments. In addition, there were 9 senior ambassadors. The Senior Ambassadors had completed the programme in 2013/14 or 2014/15 and provided advice and guidance to the current cohort.
- More structured research project: students undertook a small research project in groups and presented this in the final SADL Celebration event. The projects explored issues such as how to improve LSE education quality. Each group was led by three Senior Ambassadors.
- A greater attempt was made to clarify the Student Ambassador role.

#### Objectives of this study

The end of the third year of SADL is a prime opportunity to conduct an impact study of SADL capturing feedback from the major stakeholders, including student ambassadors, Senior

## SADL Evaluation and impact study: 2016

Ambassadors and supporting academic staff. The data provides insights and directions for positioning SADL in the future. It also captures evidence about how best to facilitate the development of digital literacies at LSE through collaboration between academics and the academic support departments, the undergraduate student population and other universities.

In evaluating the impact of SADL, the team considered the following as measures of success:

- Student satisfaction levels with the programme
- Evidence of increased knowledge/confidence of students in digital and information literacy practices
- Staff satisfaction levels with the programme and evidence of increased knowledge
- Statistics from the SADL blog to show its reach at and beyond LSE.

## Methodology

The evaluation and impact study used a combination of data collection methods, including a survey and interviews with stakeholders to explore the impact at LSE. External impact has been identified via Blog Statistics from the programme website and from the dissemination activities, e.g. conferences. The stakeholders are student participants, librarians, academic departments/ supervisors, LTI staff and those with an interest in digital literacy outside LSE.

### Survey and Interviews

At the outset of the programme students completed a research practices questionnaire that had also been used in previous years. Similarly, at the end of the programme, students were sent a questionnaire which repeated some of the same questions. Students were also invited to participate in an individual structured interview. The SADL teaching team, which comprises of members of LTI and Library staff took part in a focus group. Additional data was collected by the SADL evaluation team from a workshop with Senior Ambassadors and staff to explore the 'Visitor and Resident' concept developed by David White and Alison Le Cornu. The Visitors and Residents concept is an alternative to the Digital Natives vs Digital Immigrants model and looks at mapping individual's engagement with the web (White & Cornu, 2011). 'Visitors use the web with a clearly defined goal and then go online as if into a



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tool shed to select appropriate tools to achieve their goal (White & Cornu, 2011). In this case, the users leave relatively minimal traces of themselves online. Meanwhile, 'residents' see the web as a park or building where there is a community and they share information about their life and work. In this sense, part of their lives are actually lived in an online community. SADL used the mapping approach to understand the mode of interaction students engage with academic material and digital literacy in general.

In the survey, students were asked about their experiences of the following areas:

- Recruitment
- Workshops
- What being involved in SADL meant to them
- Their Research practices after joining SADL.

In the interviews, students were asked about their experiences of the following areas:

- Advertising and recruitment to the programme
- Communication with the SADL team, fellow ambassadors and students who are not in the SADL programme
- The role of ambassadors
- Workshops
- Support from the team
- Branding and career focus in specific workshops

In the focus group for V&R, students and staff were asked:

- To draw individual maps about their online activities engaging mode – resident or visitor? Institutional or Resident?
- In a group of 5 or 6, review each other's map and discuss them
- Try to come up with a general pattern from the maps

The staff focus group was composed of staff who had taught or been involved in SADL, mainly the members of the team, LTI members and academic support librarians. They were asked about the following areas:

- Understanding of SADL
- Impact of SADL on their own engagement and learning
- Impact of SADL on LSE as an institution.

## Reponses

### Survey

29 students completed the pre-SADL survey and 22 post-SADL surveys were collected from the student ambassadors participating in SADL 2015/16. The response rate was 72.5% and 55% respectively.

### Interview and focus group

Interviews were conducted with 2 senior student ambassadors, 5 student ambassadors, 1 graduate SADL student, 1 academic staff, 4 members of staff from the LSE Library and 3 members of LTI. The data has been anonymised.

### SADL Blog Statistics

We analysed the SADL blog statistics between September 2015 and the beginning of July 2016. According to different registered IP address, we attempted to differentiate internal viewership from external viewership. Through this, these statistics can help to measure the impact of SADL and the scale of its reach. At the same time, it can measure which engines and places redirected the viewership.

## Results and Discussion

### Impact of SADL on students

#### Overall rating

Both interview and survey results reflect a positive attitude towards SADL. The survey scores given by the students averaged at 6 out of 10 for overall rating. This indicated that the programme was relatively good but that there is still room for improvement. Below are the main themes mentioned by respondents.

#### Workshop content: building more advanced digital literacies

There was no overall preference for one aspect of digital literacy support however in general students wanted more advanced skills than the workshops currently offer. For example, some Statistics students found the session that covered referencing skills less useful, whereas those in qualitative subjects rated it highly. This may suggest that students from

different disciplines attending the same workshop may not benefit or value equally the course content. Most respondents agreed that it was useful to include a variety of content in SADL. Above all, the majority of students valued the research and academic practices workshops (Workshops 1 and 2). Although they said the workshops were less enjoyable than the other workshops (in particular Workshop 4), they recognised the content as beneficial to their academic studies and felt it helped them to get a better mark. In addition, note taking and skim reading tactics were frequently mentioned by the participants as useful skills to obtain either for academic or daily life purposes.

In addition to the more 'serious side of SADL', half of the respondents said they enjoyed the last two workshops.

*"The collaboration and time management apps helped me a lot!"*

The workshops introducing students to specific apps for managing and sharing information and time management were appreciated because they helped them to manage their academic life. Moreover, the last two workshops were perceived as being more fun and interactive. These two sessions seemed to offer students skills that might be useful beyond the degree. They reported that it was beneficial to have discussions around new digital tools and technologies ideas such as 'going paperless'. The discussions were perceived as important in helping the students become more 'digitally educated'. The third workshop was particularly welcomed by the respondents, because the students got to try out the apps. Here, the practicality of the workshops was perceived as a particular advantage.

Although the current workshop design is satisfactory and students believed all the content was worth keeping, respondents also suggested a few ways to diversify and improve SADL. It was suggested the programme should be more grounded in real-life and to include a number of aspects set out below.

Firstly, SADL could be more explicitly *career related*. For instance, as part of the workshop on digital identity, content about how to manage your LinkedIn profile could be included.

Alternatively, the programme could be more *entrepreneur related*, for example focusing on the skills students need if they were setting up their own business.

Students suggested to dividing the programme into different tracks; for example, making it career-focused, entrepreneur-focused or academic-focused and allowing students to choose which track to opt for. On the matter of making some of the content more engaging, it was suggested that SADL could introduce academic digital tools to investigate students' personal interests such as researching and finding good quality beauty products or a personal interest in animals.

The majority of the post-SADL survey respondents and 6 out of 8 of the students interviewed expressed concerns over the fact that SADL was too basic. It was suggested that it is important to still briefly cover basic digital skills, but to explore more advanced skills. In addition to the functions and tools that everyone knows how to use (such as Google), SADL could introduce more information about tools that students are not familiar with. An opportunity to learn new knowledge and skills may attract more students to be part of the programme. For example, many of the interviewees mentioned it would be better to have more technical content such as learning advanced Excel skills or to learn the Java computer programming language. In addition to adding more technical content into the programme, students felt the workshops on academic research could be more detailed.

While they did agree that workshop topics were already relevant to them, they wanted to explore them in more depth, e.g. learning more about the advanced features of academic search engines, not just Google. Workshops should focus more on how to *organise* information, instead of merely finding it. Most of the survey respondents stated that they trusted the information they found more when it came from official organisations. Instead of helping them find information, it is more beneficial to introduce students to ways of managing the existing information. This would shift the focus on SADL to include content about tools and apps which can help categorise, analyse and manage information more efficiently.

#### A sense of community and personal touch

Students enjoyed the face-to-face aspects of the workshops and learning with their peers.

This finding suggests it would be beneficial for SADL to introduce more elements of peer

support. They also suggested that it would be beneficial to build up a learning community—for the ambassadors to share information amongst themselves. The majority of the students enjoyed the process of ‘mutual learning’. They reported that it was interesting to learn about other student’s online habits and to compare them to their own. In general, the atmosphere of the SADL peer group was perceived to be caring and friendly and as an escape from the pressures of LSE life. Being in the same community gives ambassadors the opportunity to talk to their peers, especially other students whom they have never met before. Indeed, they obtain a larger social network. For example, one of the Malaysian students from the Department of Statistics told us that it was a great opportunity for her to push herself outside of her comfort zone and start to make friends with people outside of the Malaysian friends she had and her Statistics classmates. Apart from the interactions that occurred among students, the interactions with staff and senior ambassadors were also highlighted by students. Students thought the support from staff was helpful and could be perceived as an ‘institutional feature’. They also found the Senior Ambassadors friendly and informative.

Some students felt that SADL could be branded differently to make it more informal and engaging. For example, while crafting the messages, it is important to ensure the programme does not sound challenging, otherwise it might intimidate students. In particular, many students felt the team should emphasise that there are no technical skills required to join the programme. Another way of making the workshops less formal was drawing on techniques such as games-based learning. With this form of teaching and learning, the workshop participants are more likely to be highly engaged. Additionally, some students found the way of interacting between the ambassadors was more in a ‘visitor’ mode rather than a ‘resident’ mode. Lacking a sense of involvement potentially discourages some students from continuing with the programme. For instance, someone felt her friend’s group (the Wednesday group) was more interactive and ‘warm’ than hers. Hence, while emphasising a sense of community offered by SADL, at the same time, it is also important to standardise the experience across the groups. Overall, it is important to ensure there is an egalitarian mode of interaction among the group members. For example, some students felt it could be useful to have group discussions in more informal settings, such as self-initiated conversations over coffee and to build more icebreaker activities into the workshops.

### Final presentation: More formalised but more freedom

Although a couple of students did not enjoy the final presentation, most of them thought it was beneficial. Students said the presentations were useful to see what other students had done throughout the programme. However, it was suggested that in order to make the presentation more enjoyable, more structure was needed with the project and the process of preparing the presentation. There were several suggestions about how to do this. Firstly, the group leaders need to ensure the workload is distributed evenly to group members. In order to do so, it may be worth bringing more criteria to measure individual's effort. Furthermore, the SADL team could set milestones for the final project to coincide with the workshops. These changes would mean students were less likely to treat the project as an optional activity, when it was in fact a core part of the programme. In addition to setting standards within the groups, students believed it was important to standardise the experience across the different groups, to ensure consistency in experience and to improve the final presentation quality. In addition, a few respondents mentioned that it would be useful to develop leadership skills for the Senior Ambassadors to help them to direct the work of the group. In order to achieve this, it might be worth providing them with a short training course from LSE Careers.

In terms of the topic of the presentation, students felt it might be better to include a wider range of subjects to allow them to examine different aspects of society or students' lives. In addition to academic topics the presentation projects could be associated with students' career ideas, with entrepreneurship or other topics of interest.

In order to achieve the previous two points, respondents provided several suggestions and comments:

- 1) The pre and post SADL workshop meetings that were held with the teaching team and the Senior Ambassadors are extremely important to get constructive feedback on the content and operation of the programme and these should continue.
- 2) Workshop materials should be made accessible to the students on Moodle in a properly structured manner. Interestingly the SADL team did use Moodle, so it is important to ensure

that students were aware of where these resources were and to point them to the folders regularly in the workshops and via email.

3) The project needed more structure and milestones as students worked on their final project. For example, the team could set a deadline for groups to upload their presentations.

4) Again, in relation to the final presentation, the work distributed to individual members in a group needs to be equal.

### Scaling up the programme

Before giving suggestions about how to scale up the programme, it is important to be cautious about scaling up SADL in the first place. If the cohort becomes bigger, the personal touch of SADL may be lost. Several participants mentioned that the current size of SADL is suitable. The current marketing and promotion for SADL was recognised as fairly effective. However, if the team wants to further promote the programme, there were a number of suggested ways to do this:

#### 1) Collaborating with academic departments:

One of the respondents mentioned that it would be beneficial and efficient to include information about SADL in the presentations that departments offer about workshops on essay/dissertation writing: the content of the first two workshops is very relevant here. SADL could also have a point of contact to email the departments promptly with clearer and shorter messages, thus to gain department attention. To do this effectively the programme needs to explicitly link between SADL and academic study. It was suggested that SADL could run separate workshops for the staff as a taster session to SADL. In addition, the team should encourage students to mention the importance of technology in annual feedback surveys on teaching at LSE. The aim is that, hopefully, staff can be made more technologically aware and they will then encourage more students to join the programme.

#### 2) Wider advertising:

More posters need to be displayed early during the term. Expanding on this, it is important to utilise various digital and real-life platforms to get information across to students. Here working with the Students' Union was considered important.

### 3) Efficient information delivery:

Ensuring the right information goes to the right group of people is important. For example, SADL should have a stand at fresher's fair, ideally in the library, to reach the widest number of undergraduates in one go. It was suggested that the recruitment should focus on first year students particularly, because they are more open to try out new things. In order to do so, SADL could be promoted to students in their halls of residence. In addition, the existing SADL students can be invited to speak at the welcome events during the fresher's week.

## SADL and Students' Careers

### *Reinforce interests in technology and develops skills*

The evaluation found that SADL inspires and reinforces students' interest in technology. One of the graduates explicitly mentioned that she never thought about leveraging technology in her life until she joined SADL. Through her experiences on SADL she realised that she could apply for technology-related jobs in her career regardless of her degree programme. The majority of the participants mentioned that they had always perceived IT and Technology as a field they wanted to work in. SADL plays more of a role of reaffirming and deepening their interest in technology. For example, one respondent mentioned that

*'My way of looking at digital tools has changed, it is interesting to see how to utilise phones and laptops (which are always used for personal purposes), for academic or more formal purposes'*

Thus SADL plays a role in helping students to understand how to leverage technology and it directs their interest in technology towards more formal purposes. SADL also equips participants with relevant skills that make them more confident with using technology. For example, one of the participants mentioned she was interested in media and marketing, and being part of SADL had given her skills to build up skills which would help in her career path. Students believed that SADL offered something more than 'Microsoft Office' and enabled them to understand how to use digital tools for learning. Aside from professional skills, soft skills such as communication, and leadership skills that SADL offered were perceived as valuable to students in any setting.



### *Promoting SADL with a career focus?*

As there is a focus on SADL related to students' careers, respondents discussed whether it was a good idea to brand the programme with a career focus. The majority of the students agreed that this would be a good idea because LSE students are all very career orientated. With the career aspect of SADL explicitly stated, the programme might attract more students. Clearly, it is beneficial to students' CVs and employment chances to show that they have done something else other than studying. It is particularly valuable for the employers to see that the students are digitally aware. However, a couple of respondents mentioned some concerns with promoting the programme with a career focus. Firstly, it mismatches with the nature of the programme which is primarily academic focused. Thus, if the team wanted to promote career as the main focus, the workshop content would need to be amended. It might make more sense to include one further session to address how digital literacy can help with students' career. If the content remains the same, then the career focus should not be overly advertised.

One concern raised by students was that if the team explicitly states SADL's career focus, the programme will attract students who only look for things to add to their CV rather than those who are genuinely committed to peer support and academic excellence. Therefore it is suggested that SADL could be promoted as helping students' employability, but without over-emphasising any career focus or de-emphasising the academic focus.

### *The benefits of being a Senior Ambassador and general characteristics of ambassador*

Senior Ambassadors saw SADL as a place for continuous learning and growth. Many of them found that the first year was a great opportunity to learn the basics and those who remained engaged in the programme, acting as Senior Ambassadors were much more familiar with what it was trying to achieve. At the same time, Senior Ambassadors valued being able to take the initiative and actively develop their leadership skills. Respondents clearly outlined the characteristics of what an ambassador should be like and they suggested that role needs to be more clearly defined. Senior ambassadors need to have a passion for digital literacy and should be knowledgeable about it. It is important for them to have a clear perception of SADL and the aim of the student projects. They should be interested in current affairs and be willing to debate and discuss digital trends. They should be out-going and friendly. They

should be willing to share knowledge. They should both bring their own knowledge to share with other SADL participants and take the knowledge learnt from SADL to a wider audience. They should be well-informed and organised about what to do in every session. Finally, they are expected to take the initiative to talk to other group members about their problems with technology, and thus develop essential leadership skills.

### Other suggestions

A number of uncategorised suggestions were raised during the interviews, including:

- Evening sessions and additional timeslots for the workshops.
- A 're-connecting' session half-way through for the participants who missed one or two sessions.
- The acronym SADL needs to be clearer. It was suggested to get rid of the acronym in favour of a more straightforward name such as 'digital literacy workshops'.
- The role of the Ambassadors needs to be more explicit, to be clear if the workshops are training for their own benefit, or to help train them to be ambassadors to provide peer support.
- SADL's benefits and objectives need to be more clearly described with action and result orientated guidelines.

### Staff feedback

#### 'Four interactions' – Great that SADL is interactive

As with the students' feedback, several themes emerged from the focus group undertaken with the library and LTI staff who form the SADL teaching team. First, staff appreciate three different elements of interaction/ opportunities within the workshops, namely, a) a collegiate and collaborative interaction between the students, b) the benefit of showing each other about digital tools, and c) the opportunity to develop and build on new friendships outside the workshops.

*'SADL is more about the group work, whilst the other sessions are more in a form that one person sits at the computer'*

Second, staff appreciate working with members of different departments. The collaboration between the Library and LTI allows them to share their expertise and brings staff together to learn from each other's way of teaching. Staff also value the 'team teaching' aspect. One member of staff said 'You are not on your own while teaching the workshop'. Some of the staff reported that it is easier when you know you are not the only one delivering the workshops. Finally, SADL helps to develop an informal relationship between students and staff. SADL workshops are very interactive and the six sessions allow staff to establish relationship with the students. In this sense, SADL is a gateway for LTI and library staff to get insights into students' life at LSE. They can contact the students outside of the workshops. Furthermore, when students see the interactions between the staff as less formal, they feel more comfortable with expressing their ideas. The interactive model of teaching, means that staff can not only gather students' feedback on SADL, they can also gain feedback from students about how to improve services in general. This contrasts with the information skills workshops the Library currently run where the undergraduate students attend in very low numbers and tend to book one-off sessions.

### Structure vs Agency – a balance to keep for both

There is an extensive literature discussing the dynamic balance between structure and agency in work and academic settings. The literature suggests that it is important to offer more agency to individuals rather than using structures to control them (Billett, 2006). In addition, Jisc are doing a lot of work to develop staff student partnerships in the field of technology enhanced learning and curriculum design, through the Change Agents Network (<https://www.jisc.ac.uk/rd/projects/change-agents-network>). Throughout the focus group staff asked for more structure while preparing for the workshops. This suggests a need for consistency between the knowledge of staff and students.

It was further suggested that it would be better for workshop teachers to have the same group of students across different weeks. This year, several staff did not have the same students every week, which made it harder to establish a personal rapport with them over programme, which in turn dented their confidence in knowing if the teaching content was

appropriate. Teaching to one cohort of students would make the sessions flow better and enjoyable for both parties.

Many staff mentioned that the lesson plans were useful for ensuring consistency across the groups. Such a document is particularly beneficial for staff who are less familiar with the technology or apps they are meant to introduce and discuss. The lesson plan gives staff the opportunity to discuss the best way of teaching and to learn from each other. During pre-SADL meetings, staff valued being able to discuss and negotiate the lesson plan, which then meant they were more confident with the course delivery. However, it was important to ensure that the plan is flexible and allows staff to respond to students' needs. A balance between the structure and allowing for staff input into their own session seemed important. The above would be the good practice. However, without a lesson plan and briefing staff may not feel confident about the teaching material. For example, one of the staff in the focus group said:

'It feels like you have just given the material right before the presentations, and you just have to remember the material quicker than the students'.

Ownership of the teaching material seems to be important to the teachers. In addition, sometimes the lesson plan did not match up with the slides that were provided and sometimes the slides need to be tidied up to articulate a clearer message. It is therefore important to allow staff to interpret the workshop contents and structure them in the way that makes sense to them, to give them a sense of ownership. It was suggested that perhaps an initial lesson plan should be editable by all, so allowing individual teachers to determine the ultimate version of the material they would use. It was concluded that staff feel less confident with the teaching material if they do not take part in the planning session, although several noted they had struggled to find time to attend these sessions.

Apart from their own agency, the staff we interviewed also discussed how much agency should have been given to students. On the one hand, it is important to hear from students about the ways they learn, and to ask them to consider the concept of 'digital literacy' and how to improve their learning habits. However it was also important to encourage students

to try out digital tools autonomously. Therefore while delivering instruction, it was also important to give students the opportunity to make choices and to give them the time and space to experiment, and to judge for themselves which tools they found helpful.

### Rename SADL

Similar to the student feedback, the suitability of the acronym SADL wasn't entirely clear to staff. Staff felt it may be worth explicitly stating what digital literacy is. It was important to market SADL to different departments and make sure staff are aware of the function of technology, even in the more qualitative departments at LSE. The team should also mention how digital literacy can inform and shape students' career choices. The focus group said that, instead of solely emphasising 'career skills', it is important to stress general 'employability skills' and the idea of 'personal growth'. SADL offers students a way of developing skills beyond a career.

### The role of Senior Ambassadors

The role of Senior Ambassador was another important topic that was highlighted by staff. There were two contrasting views of Senior Ambassadors by staff. Half of the staff mentioned that Senior Ambassadors, especially those that were more experienced, were helpful and more active. They felt they were good at getting students talking and getting them to do the tasks, especially in the third workshop when all ambassadors were asked to make a video. They were perceived as knowledgeable and competent when helping to prepare and to deliver workshops.

However, some staff believed that the Senior Ambassadors were not helpful enough. Staff stated that some of them were not as involved. 'Some of them were just sitting there and not taking the initiative' and did not perform their responsibilities as expected by their roles. SADL might need to give clear guidance to them such as 'at this point, this is your responsibility to do this, this, this'. Students and staff suggested that training sessions would be beneficial to the Senior Ambassadors to make clear their role and the expectations of the SADL team.

In addition, it was suggested to only recruit first year students to the SADL programme. Experience suggests that it is still likely to take two years for the Senior Ambassadors to be comfortable with taking the initiative and leading workshops. The Senior Ambassadors who worked in this role for two years were more likely to act on their own initiative such as to go and try technologies and tools out and come back to tell the SADL team.

### Scaling up the programme

The staff also discussed the possibility of scaling up the SADL programme. The consensus was that SADL should be scaled up to allow more students to take advantage of its benefits. However, it was stressed that it was important to keep the personal touch. They suggested three potential ways to scale up the programme.

- 1) To have a larger group of students in the programme.

Overall staff concluded it would not be beneficial to expand the workshops in size beyond 20-30 students, because it would transform the workshop format into one more like a lecture. Subsequently, it may lose the interactivity and personal touch of the programme. It would also be challenging for the groups to maintain the same quality with too many people.

- 2) Keeping the group size as it is presently but having more groups. However, there are resource implications of this model and there may not be enough staff to teach the sessions.
- 3) The most promising suggestion could be called the 'Ripple effect'. It relies on a model of workshop content delivered from staff to ambassadors and then the ambassadors delivering the same content to other students. The structure of the workshops that students would offer would follow the same format as those delivered by the staff. This approach allows the ambassadors to perform the role of 'ambassador' and deliver the messages to a wider audience. Giving them more incentives such as monetary rewards to do this would be important if this model was to be effective. However this model would also be a great opportunity for all the ambassadors to have an acknowledgement on their CV and some teaching experience.

### SADL Blog Statistics & Reach

In order to analyse the impact of SADL beyond the students who were part of the programme the impact of the SADL blog was evaluated. Between September 2015 and the beginning of July 2016 the SADL blog was visited 19771 times. Two main viewership spikes were recorded, one at the beginning of Michaelmas term (October) and the other at the beginning of Lent term (February). As a point of comparison, the SADL blog's view count (19771) sits between the Library blog's view count (17136) and the LTI blog's view count (30363).

<b>SADL Blog - All Views (1 Sep 2015 - 6 Jul 2016)</b>	
<b>Month</b>	<b>Nb of Views</b>
Sep 2015	2080
Oct 2015	4556
Nov 2015	3530
Dec 2015	1456
Jan 2016	1235
Feb 2016	2231
Mar 2016	1928
Apr 2016	755
May 2016	840
Jun 2016	257
Jul 2016	219
<b>Overall Views Total</b>	<b>19,771</b>

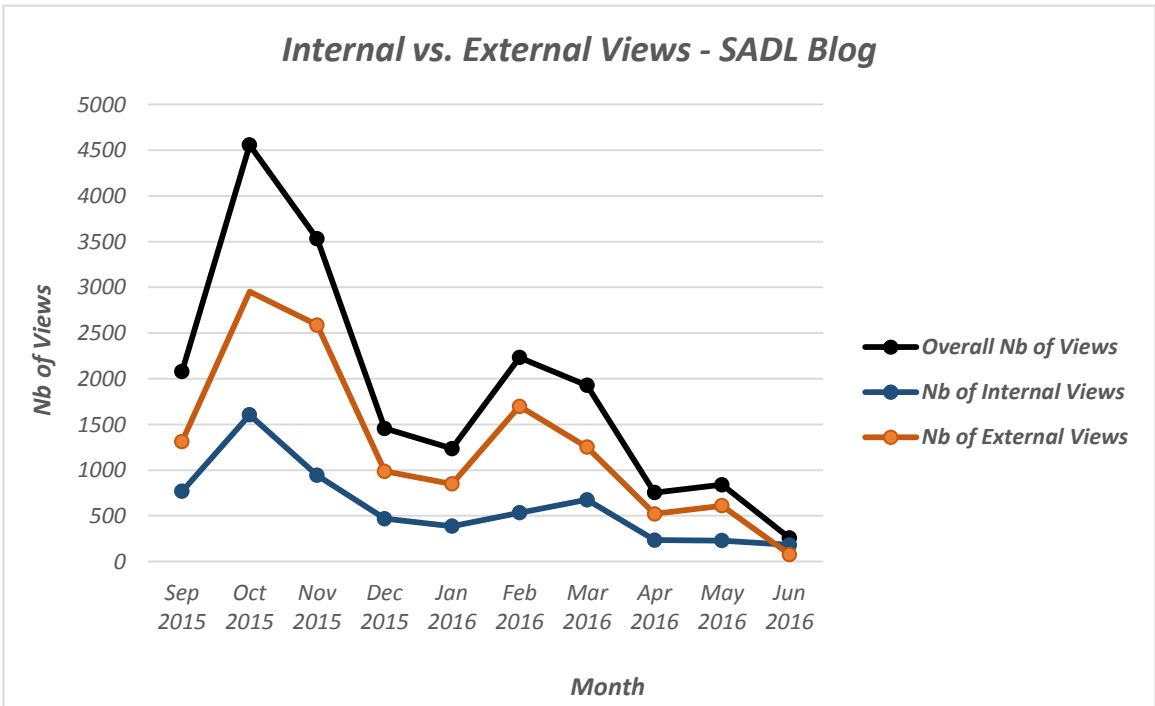
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The overall view count can be subdivided into internal and external views. The internal view count corresponds to the number of times users have accessed the blog under an LSE registered IP address (from campus or halls). The external view count measures the number of views from non-LSE IP addresses.

External views make up about 70% of the overall traffic to the blog, whereas internal views only represent 30% of the total traffic. This seems to suggest that the SADL blog’s impact extends beyond LSE. Indeed, even if some external views could be staff or students accessing the blog using non-LSE IP addresses, many external views are likely to be from visitors. It can thus be assumed that SADL reaches beyond the LSE community, inspiring other universities and digital literacy programmes.

Again, as a point of comparison, the SADL blog’s number of external views as a percentage of the overall view count (70%) sits between the LTI blog (60%) and the Library blog (80%).

	LTI Blog	SADL Blog	Library Blog
<b>Overall Views Total</b>	30363	19771	17136
<b>External Views Total</b>	17978	13709	13798
<b>External Views as % of Overall Views</b>	<b>59,80%</b>	<b>69,30%</b>	<b>80,50%</b>





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Over the last year, 67% of all visits to the SADL blog were redirected from search engines. Google UK was the most common referrer, followed – perhaps more interestingly – by Google Ireland. The high number of redirections from google.ie seem to have occurred after Jane Secker gave a presentation about SADL at the University of Limerick. Furthermore, the ‘All aboard HE’ website, an Irish digital literacy programme, lists SADL as its main inspiration. The high number of redirections from Google Ireland can thus be taken as proof that SADL inspires and reaches beyond the LSE community.

16% of the overall traffic to the SADL blog was redirected from Twitter. The top accounts that tweeted links either to the SADL Twitter account or the blog were all non-LSE academics or support staff – including:

- Amanda Taylor (University of Central Lancashire, Lecturer)
- Moira Wright (UCL, Digital Education Division)
- James Molloy (UCD, Library Services)
- Leone Gately (UCD, Educational Technology Division)

Again, the level of engagement from non-LSE academics and professional services staff shows that SADL reaches beyond the LSE community.

Visitors also used the LSE website’s build-in search to reach the SADL blog. The most frequently used key words were: SADL, Jane Secker and Andra Fry. Jane and Andra’s names were looked up after both gave a presentation about SADL at the Academic Practice and Technology (APT) conference in July 2016. This shows that discussing SADL at major conference sparks additional interest in the programme.

Some visitors were redirected from Slideshare and the SADL blog. Those visitors were viewing the slides used by Jane Secker at the CILIP conference before visiting the blog. Again, it is clear that discussing SADL at major conferences draws additional traffic to the blog and hence broadens the programme’s reach.

Finally, some visitors were redirected from other universities’ websites to the SADL blog. These universities were:

- University College Dublin (Ireland)

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- Galway University (Ireland)
- University of Sheffield
- Greenwich University

Again this maps on to conferences where the SADL programme was presented:

- Jane Secker presented the SADL programme at the University of Limerick (staff from all across Ireland attended)
- Maria Bell and Ellen Wilkinson spoke about SADL at the LILAC conference at Sheffield Hallam University
- Jane Secker and Andra Fry presented at APT at Greenwich University

This corroborates the idea that discussing SADL at conferences broadens the programme's reach. Indeed, there is a clear correlation between the location of the conference and the sources of redirection to the SADL blog.

## Conclusion and recommendations

There are several themes emerging from this report, in summary for students:

- The content and structure of the SADL workshops is appropriate and valued by students. However, there is still room for improvement. There are two ways to improve.
  - Firstly, the programme could include new content such as skills that focus on students' career to keep it new and fresh.
  - Secondly, it needs to offer more 'advanced' digital literacy skills, such as coding and advanced use of spreadsheets.
- Maintaining a sense of 'community' is important, therefore the relatively small groups and the interactive nature of the programme should be retained. This approach is beneficial to all students but particularly those who might be experiencing difficulties or stress with life at LSE.
- In terms of student employability, SADL seems to be influencing and reinforcing SADL students' career choices. Consequently, it may be appropriate for the SADL team to promote the programme as benefitting or enhancing employability. However, the team should bear in mind that too much focus on employability may mislead

student's about the nature of SADL and may attract students who only want something on their CV.

- When it comes to the final project, the topics of the projects should be more varied. Instead of an academic focus, the team should offer other topics for example related to entrepreneurship or related to a students' discipline. At the same time, the team could provide the groups working on the project with a more formal and professional structure. It might also be helpful to provide students with more guidance and more systematic checks along the way for instance, a deadline for when to upload their presentation.
- Another main theme discussed was scaling up the programme. Some of the respondents expressed a concern that scaling up the programme may lose the personal and community aspect of SADL. Most of the students suggested ways to promote the programme in both online and offline ways through means such as word-of-mouth, departmental contacts or through the student ambassadors talking to their peers and holding surgery style workshops.
- Lastly, the evaluation also focused on the role of senior ambassadors and ambassadors in general. All the interviewed senior ambassadors appreciated the fact that it is a two or three year programme, so they can have continuous personal development.
- The required attributes of a senior ambassador were friendliness, being digitally aware, being communicative and having a sense of leadership. One important recommendation is to put the recruitment focus on first year students, to allow for this developmental role and to make explicit the role of the Senior Ambassador.

#### For staff specifically

- Similar to the students' feedback, the SADL staff team also appreciated the sense of 'community' in the programme. In general, people identified four types of interactions:
  - between the students,
  - between students and staff,
  - between staff,
  - between the two teams: library and LTI.

- Staff feedback highlights the importance of the community. It supports the idea that SADL offers interaction between different groups and opportunities for the community to develop and learn together.
- The main tension voiced by staff was around the balance between 'Structure and Agency' in terms of the students and staff on the programme. Firstly, they all agreed that there should be a lesson plan for staff to refer to. They also agreed that they should have a pre-session meeting and be involved in finalising the lesson plan to ensure people have the same level of knowledge and a similar manner of delivering content.
- Staff also discussed a 'structure vs agency' relationship between the teachers and the students. It is useful to suggest specific digital tools to students and encourage them to try out tools and apps. However, it is important to let students decide individually how they best use technology and tools in their academic and personal lives.
- A theme that came across both in students' feedback and staff feedback was the branding of the programme. It was suggested the programme should brand itself more clearly, and better define the role of an ambassador, and potentially to drop the acronym SADL. The programme needs to state more explicitly its relationship with digital literacy and what ambassadors are expected to do. At the same time, there need to be more guidance given to senior ambassadors. In order to do so, the SADL team must communicate what is expected from the senior ambassadors more clearly. It must also provide training courses to help them achieve that expectation.
- Staff suggested that if LSE wishes to expand the programme, it would be the best to do a 'ripple pattern' approach making use of peer support. This would mean that the ambassadors learn the course content from the staff and are supported to deliver the content to a wider audience.

The SADL blog statistics seem to suggest that the programme reaches beyond the LSE community, inspiring other universities and digital literacy initiatives. The vast majority of the overall traffic is 'external', suggesting that many non-LSE viewers visit the blog. Redirections to the blog also suggest that discussing SADL at major conferences increased the number of external visits. This level of engagement from non-LSE staff shows that SADL reaches beyond the LSE community. The programme has been highlighted recently by Jisc

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through the Change Agents Network and a best practice case study has been written for their website.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Interview questions for the ambassadors

1. How did you enjoy SADL in general?
2. What are the advantages of SADL / what sort of the things you learnt from SADL?
3. In which aspects do you think SADL program can be more efficient or improved in general?
4. How do you think we can attract more students/staff to participate in the program and to gain wider benefits from SADL?
5. Did taking part in the programme influence your choice of career at all (if any)?

More about the specific content of the workshops

1. What do you think the workshop structure? Also do you think the final project it is a good idea?
2. Which workshop(s) did you enjoy the most (if you can recall)? Why?
3. Which aspects of digital literacy do you think people enjoy the most and should be our focus? Academic related? Or more daily life management? Interesting apps? Digital identity?
4. What role did you play in the final project? Do you think the final presentation is a good idea?

A role of being an ambassador?

1. What it is to be a good ambassador? How do you define a good ambassador?
2. What are the skills they need to do a good job in the ambassador role?

### Appendix 2: Questions for the staff focus group

How does teaching on SADL compare to teaching other workshops you do / one to one interactions with students?

(here we would like to know how many undergraduate students they see generally)

How do they feel about teaching with a lesson plan determined by the SADL team?

What is their experience of working with the Senior Ambassadors on the workshops?

What to them have been the key advantages to SADL for them?

Are there any drawbacks to the SADL programme?

What has surprised them from teaching on the workshops? Were there any aspects they thought students would already know?

### Appendix 3: 2014-2015 Post SADL Questionnaire

1. Please indicate your level of study

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- 1. First year
  - 2. Second year
  - 3. Final year
2. Are you a student in...?
- 1. Department of Social Policy
  - 2. Department of Statistics
  - 3. Department of Law
  - 4. Department of International Relations
3. What motivated you to get involved with SADL?
- 1. A positive reference on your Personal Development Aide Memoir (PDAM)
  - 2. The chance to earn Amazon vouchers
  - 3. Ability to network with other students and LSE staff
  - 4. Opportunity to gain information and digital literacy skills
  - 5. Chance to represent your department/peers
  - 6. Others (please elaborate)
4. The four SADL workshops are listed below. Please rank them in order of usefulness with 1 being useful, 5 being very useful and 0 being didn't attend. (If you need a reminder of the content of each session please see the SADL resources on the [project blog](#))

#		0	1	2	3	4
1	Workshop 1: Introduction to the SADL project					
2	Workshop 2: Academic practices: reading and research					
3	Workshop 3: Managing and sharing information					
4	Workshop 4: Managing your digital identity and the digital future					

5. Please tell us about any aspects of the workshops that you found useful/less useful. Please note, there is no word limit for your response. Please be as descriptive as possible.
6. Would you recommend a friend to get involved in SADL?
7. Were there any additional topics you expected to be covered in the programme?
8. The next 6 questions are designed to capture further information about your experiences of being involved in SADL. Please include any thoughts about changes that should be made to the role of a student ambassador for digital literacy in the future.



9. Please tell us about any ways in which you shared the skills and tools you gained from SADL.
10. Please tell us your thoughts on the group project led by the Senior Ambassador, if it was useful and what you learned from it.
11. What kind of support would enable you to be successful in your Ambassador role for your department?
12. Please tell us about the areas you felt you made the biggest contribution.
13. Finally please tell us if you think the role is more/less useful at certain times in the academic year and include any other points not covered already.
14. When you are doing research for a scholarly project (i.e. research you are asked to do for your course), where do you begin your searches (e.g. library database, specific website, library search)? What is the first thing you are likely to do? Please be as specific as you can.
15. Rate the relative importance of each of the following resources in your coursework/research (1 being not important, 5 being essential)

		Importance (1-5)
1	Books	
2	Public Search Engines (e.g, Yahoo! Google)	
3	Scholarly search engines (e.g, Google Scholar)	
4	Newspapers or Magazine	
5	Face-to-face discussions/interviews with people	
6	Online message boards or discussion groups	
7	Public records (e.g, government documents)	
8	Library Search	
9	Online journal databases (e.g JSTOR)	
10	Online book stores (e.g, Amazon)	

16. On a scale of 1-10 (1 being dislike very much, and 10 being enjoy very much), how much do you enjoy doing research?
17. What would you say are your greatest strengths and weaknesses as a researcher?
18. When searching through the library search, media articles and print resources, how do you assess which sources you will use?
19. When searching the internet, how do you assess which sources you will use?

20. Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. We will enter you into a draw to receive a £20 Amazon voucher if you enter your email address below:

Appendix 4: A Residents and Visitors map sample

