

## CRITICAL THINKING COMPETENCIES IN THE AGE OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

**Sultonova Maftuna Baxtiyorovna,**

*Senior teacher, Uzbekistan State World Languages University, Uzbekistan,*

*e-mail: [sultonovamaftuna22@gmail.com](mailto:sultonovamaftuna22@gmail.com)*

**Abstract:** *The rapid growth of digital technologies has profoundly transformed the way information is created, shared, and consumed in the modern world. In this digital age, young people are constantly exposed to vast amounts of information through the Internet, social media, and online platforms. While digital technologies provide unprecedented access to knowledge and learning opportunities, they also increase the risk of misinformation, superficial thinking, and passive consumption of content. This article explores the importance of critical thinking skills in the digital age, examining both the opportunities and challenges associated with digital information environments. It emphasizes the role of education and digital literacy in developing individuals who can analyze information critically, make informed decisions, and participate responsibly in digital society.*

**Keywords:** *critical thinking, digital age, information literacy, education, media literacy, decision-making*

### Introduction

In the contemporary digital era, the ability to think critically has become one of the most essential skills for individuals, particularly young people. The digital age is characterized by rapid technological advancement, constant connectivity, and unlimited access to information. From social media feeds to online news platforms, individuals encounter information continuously, often without clear distinctions between reliable sources and misleading content. As a result, critical thinking skills are no longer optional but necessary for navigating digital environments effectively. Understanding how to evaluate information, question assumptions, and make reasoned judgments is crucial for personal, academic, and professional success in the modern world.

One of the key benefits of critical thinking in the digital age is its role in education. Digital technologies have expanded access to educational resources such as online courses, virtual classrooms, academic databases, and interactive learning tools. However, access alone is not sufficient. Students must be able to analyze information, distinguish facts from opinions, and assess the credibility of digital sources. Critical thinking encourages active learning by enabling learners to question content, engage in problem-solving, and apply knowledge in meaningful ways. As a result, education



that integrates critical thinking skills prepares students to become independent and lifelong learners.

Another important aspect of critical thinking in the digital age is its connection to media and information literacy. Social media platforms and digital news outlets allow information to spread rapidly, but not all content is accurate or reliable. False information, biased narratives, and manipulated media can easily influence public opinion. Critical thinking skills help individuals evaluate sources, recognize bias, and verify information before accepting or sharing it. This ability is especially important for young people, who are among the most active users of digital media and are often targeted by persuasive or misleading content.

In addition, critical thinking plays a significant role in decision-making and problem-solving in digital environments. Whether choosing reliable information for academic research or making everyday decisions based on online content, individuals must analyze different perspectives and consider potential consequences. Digital platforms often encourage quick reactions rather than thoughtful reflection. Developing critical thinking skills allows individuals to slow down, reflect, and make informed decisions rather than impulsive ones. This skill contributes to responsible digital citizenship and ethical online behavior.

Despite its importance, developing critical thinking skills in the digital age presents several challenges. One major issue is information overload. The constant flow of digital content can overwhelm users, making it difficult to focus deeply or think analytically. Many digital platforms prioritize speed, entertainment, and emotional reactions, which can discourage careful analysis. As a result, individuals may rely on surface-level understanding rather than critical evaluation.

Another challenge is the influence of algorithms and echo chambers. Digital platforms often personalize content based on users' preferences, limiting exposure to diverse viewpoints. This can reinforce existing beliefs and reduce opportunities for critical reflection. Without exposure to alternative perspectives, individuals may struggle to develop balanced and objective thinking. Critical thinking skills are essential for recognizing these limitations and actively seeking diverse sources of information.

To overcome these challenges, education systems must prioritize the development of critical thinking and digital literacy skills. Teaching students how to analyze information, question digital content, and engage in reflective thinking is essential in today's learning environments. Educators, parents, and institutions all play a vital role in fostering these skills by encouraging discussion, inquiry, and responsible technology use.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, critical thinking skills are fundamental in the digital age, where information is abundant but not always reliable. While digital technologies offer





significant educational and social opportunities, they also pose risks related to misinformation, superficial thinking, and biased content. The ability to think critically enables individuals to navigate digital spaces thoughtfully, make informed decisions, and participate responsibly in society. Therefore, promoting critical thinking through education and digital literacy is essential for preparing individuals to meet the challenges of the modern digital world. A balanced and reflective approach to digital information will ensure that technology serves as a tool for intellectual growth rather than confusion or manipulation.

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