Years 3 and 4

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Rationale

In a world that is increasingly digitised and automated, it is critical to the wellbeing and sustainability of the economy, the environment and society, that the benefits of information systems are exploited ethically. This requires deep knowledge and understanding of digital systems (a component of an information system) and how to manage risks. Ubiquitous digital systems such as mobile and desktop devices and networks are transforming learning, recreational activities, home life and work. Digital systems support new ways of collaborating and communicating, and require new skills such as computational and systems thinking. These technologies are an essential problem-solving toolset in our knowledge-based society.

The Australian Curriculum: Digital Technologies empowers students to shape change by influencing how contemporary and emerging information systems and practices are applied to meet current and future needs. A deep knowledge and understanding of information systems enables students to be creative and discerning decision-makers when they select, use and manage data, information, processes and digital systems to meet needs and shape preferred futures.

Digital Technologies provides students with practical opportunities to use design thinking and to be innovative developers of digital solutions and knowledge. The subject helps students to become innovative creators of digital solutions, effective users of digital systems and critical consumers of information conveyed by digital systems.

Digital Technologies provides students with authentic learning challenges that foster curiosity, confidence, persistence, innovation, creativity, respect and cooperation. These are all necessary when using and developing information systems to make sense of complex ideas and relationships in all areas of learning. Digital Technologies helps students to be regional and global citizens capable of actively and ethically communicating and collaborating.

Years 3 and 4 Achievement Standard

By the end of Year 4, students describe how a range of digital systems (hardware and software) and their peripheral devices can be used for different purposes. They explain how the same data sets can be represented in different ways.

Students define simple problems, design and implement digital solutions using algorithms that involve decision-making and user input. They explain how the solutions meet their purposes. They collect and manipulate different data when creating information and digital solutions. They safely use and manage information systems for identified needs using agreed protocols and describe how information systems are used.

Aims

In addition to the overarching aims for the Australian Curriculum: Technologies, Digital Technologies more specifically aims to develop the knowledge, understanding and skills to ensure that, individually and collaboratively, students:

- design, create, manage and evaluate sustainable and innovative digital solutions to meet and redefine current and future needs
- use computational thinking and the key concepts of abstraction; data collection, representation and interpretation; specification, algorithms and implementation to create digital solutions
- confidently use digital systems to efficiently and effectively automate the transformation of data into information and to creatively communicate ideas in a range of settings
- apply protocols and legal practices that support safe, ethical and respectful communications and collaboration with known and unknown audiences
- apply systems thinking to monitor, analyse, predict and shape the interactions within and between information systems and the impact of these systems on individuals, societies, economies and environments.

Key Ideas

Overarching idea: Creating preferred futures

The Technologies curriculum provides students with opportunities to consider how solutions that are created now will be used in the future. Students will identify the possible benefits and risks of creating solutions. They will use critical and creative thinking to weigh up possible short- and long-term impacts.

As students progress through the Technologies curriculum, they will begin to identify possible and probable futures, and their preferences for the future. They develop solutions to meet needs considering impacts on liveability, economic prosperity and environmental sustainability. Students will learn to recognise that views about the priority of the benefits and risks will vary and that preferred futures are contested.

Project management

Students will develop skills to manage projects to successful completion through planning, organising and monitoring timelines, activities and the use of resources. This includes considering resources and constraints to develop resource, finance, work and time plans; assessing and managing risks; making decisions; controlling quality; evaluating processes and collaborating and communicating with others at different stages of the process.

Students are taught to plan for sustainable use of resources when managing projects and take into account ethical, health and safety considerations and personal and social beliefs and values.

Thinking in Technologies

Systems thinking

A system is an organised group of related objects or components that form a whole. Systems thinking is a holistic approach to the identification and solving of problems where the focal points are treated as components of a system, and their interactions and interrelationships are analysed individually to see how they influence the functioning of the entire system.

In Design and Technologies, the success of designed solutions includes the generation of ideas and decisions made throughout design processes. It requires students to understand systems and work with complexity, uncertainty and risk. Students recognise the connectedness of and interactions between people, places and events in local and wider world contexts and consider the impact their designs and actions have in a connected world.

Participating in and shaping the future of information and digital systems is an integral part of learning in Digital Technologies. Understanding the complexity of systems and the interdependence of components is necessary to create timely solutions to technical, economic and social problems. Implementation of digital solutions often has consequences for the people who use and engage with the system, and may introduce unintended costs or benefits that impact the present or future society.

Design thinking

Design thinking involves the use of strategies for understanding design needs and opportunities, visualising and generating creative and innovative ideas, planning, and analysing and evaluating those ideas that best meet the criteria for success. Design thinking underpins learning in Design and Technologies. Design processes require students to identify and investigate a need or opportunity; generate, plan and realise designed solutions; and evaluate products and processes. Consideration of economic, environmental and social impacts that result from designed solutions are core to design thinking, design processes and Design and Technologies.

When developing solutions in Digital Technologies, students explore, analyse and develop ideas based on data, inputs and human interactions. When students design a solution to a problem they consider how users will be presented with data, the degree of interaction with that data and the various types of computational processing. For example, designing a maze; writing precise and accurate sequences of instructions to move a robot through the maze or testing the program and modifying the solution.

Computational thinking

Computational thinking is a problem-solving method that is applied to create solutions that can be implemented using digital technologies. It involves integrating strategies, such as organising data logically, breaking down problems into parts, interpreting patterns and models and designing and implementing algorithms.

Computational thinking is used when specifying and implementing algorithmic solutions to problems in Digital Technologies. For a computer to be able to process data through a series of logical and ordered steps, students must be able to take an abstract idea and break it down into defined, simple tasks that produce an outcome. This may include analysing trends in data, responding to user input under certain preconditions or predicting the outcome of a simulation.

This type of thinking is used in Design and Technologies during different phases of a design process when computation is needed to quantify data and solve problems. Examples include when calculating costs, testing materials and components, comparing performance or modelling trends.

Information and communication technology in the Australian Curriculum

In the Australian Curriculum, there are opportunities in all learning areas to develop information and communication technology (ICT) capability. These are described in the ICT general capability learning continuum, which is a statement about learning opportunities in the Australian Curriculum for students to develop their ICT capability.

In Digital Technologies the ICT capability is more explicit and foregrounded. Students develop explicit knowledge, understanding and skills relating to operating and managing ICT and applying social and ethical protocols while investigating, creating and communicating. The study of Digital Technologies will ensure that ICT capability is developed systematically. While specific elements are likely to be addressed within Digital Technologies learning programs, key concepts and skills are strengthened, complemented and extended across all subjects, including in Design and Technologies. This occurs as students engage in a range of learning activities with digital technologies requirements.

The clear difference between the Digital Technologies curriculum and the ICT general capability is that the capability helps students to become effective *users* of digital technologies while the Digital Technologies curriculum helps students to become confident *developers* of digital solutions

Safety

Identifying and managing risk in Technologies learning addresses the safe use of technologies as well as risks that can impact on project timelines. It covers all necessary aspects of health, safety and injury prevention and, in any technologies context, the use of potentially dangerous materials, tools and equipment. It includes ergonomics, safety including cyber safety, data security, and ethical and legal considerations when communicating and collaborating online.

Technologies learning experiences may involve the use of potentially hazardous substances and/or hazardous equipment. It is the responsibility of the school to ensure that duty of care is exercised in relation to the health and safety of all students and that school practices meet the requirements of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*, in addition to relevant state or territory health and safety guidelines.

In implementing projects with a focus on food, care must be taken with regard to food safety and specific food allergies that may result in anaphylactic reactions. The Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy has published guidelines for prevention of anaphylaxis in schools, preschools and childcare. Some states and territories have their own specific guidelines that should be followed.

When state and territory curriculum authorities integrate the Australian Curriculum into local courses, they will include more specific advice on safety.

For further information about relevant guidelines, contact your state or territory curriculum authority.

Animal ethics

Any teaching activities that involve caring, using, or interacting with animals must comply with the *Australian code of practice for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes* in addition to relevant state or territory guidelines.

When state and territory curriculum authorities integrate the Australian Curriculum into local courses, they will include more specific advice on the care and use of, or interaction with, animals.

For further information about relevant guidelines or to access your local animal ethics committee, contact your state or territory curriculum authority.

Years 3 and 4 Band Description

Learning in Digital Technologies focuses on further developing understanding and skills in computational thinking, such as categorising and outlining procedures; and developing an increasing awareness of how digital systems are used and could be used at home, in school and the local community.

By the end of Year 4, students will have had opportunities to create a range of digital solutions, such as interactive adventures that involve user choice, modelling simplified real world systems and simple guessing games.

In Year 3 and 4, students explore digital systems in terms of their components, and peripheral devices such as digital microscopes, cameras and interactive whiteboards. They collect, manipulate and interpret data, developing an understanding of the characteristics of data and their representation.

Using the concept of abstraction, students define simple problems using techniques such as summarising facts to deduce conclusions. They record simple solutions to problems through text and diagrams and develop their designing skills from initially following prepared algorithms to describing their own that support branching (choice of options) and user input. Their solutions are implemented using appropriate software including visual programming languages that use graphical elements rather than text instructions. They explain, in general terms, how their solutions meet specific needs and consider how society may use digital systems to meet needs in environmentally sustainable ways.

With teacher guidance, students identify and list the major steps needed to complete a task or project. When sharing ideas and communicating in online environments they develop an understanding of why it is important to consider the feelings of their audiences and apply safe practices and social protocols agreed by the class that demonstrate respectful behaviour.

DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

Subject structure

The Australian Curriculum: Digital Technologies (F–10) comprises two related strands:

- Digital Technologies knowledge and understanding – the information system components of data, and digital systems (hardware, software and networks)
- Digital Technologies processes and production skills – using digital systems to create ideas and information, and to define, design and implement digital solutions, and evaluate these solutions and existing information systems against specified criteria.

Relationship between the strands

Together, the two strands provide students with knowledge, understanding and skills through which they can safely and ethically exploit the capacity of information systems (people, data, processes, digital systems and their interactions) to systematically transform data into solutions that respond to the needs of individuals, society, the economy and the environment. Teaching and learning programs will typically integrate these, as content in processes and production skills frequently draws on understanding of concepts in the knowledge and understanding strand.

The strands are based on key concepts that provide a framework for knowledge and practice in Digital Technologies

Digital Technologies knowledge and understanding

This strand focuses on developing the underpinning knowledge and understanding of information systems: digital systems and representation of data

Digital systems

The digital systems content descriptions focus on the components of digital systems: hardware, software and networks. In the early years, students learn about a range of hardware and software and progress to an understanding of how data are transmitted between components within a system, and how the hardware and software interact to form networks

Representation of data

The representation of data content descriptions focus on how data are represented and structured symbolically for use by digital systems. Different types of data are studied in the bands including text, numeric, images (still and moving) and sound from Foundation to Year 8 and then categorical and relational data in Year 9 and 10.

Digital Technologies processes and production skills

This strand focuses on developing skills to create digital solutions to problems and opportunities. The Digital Technologies processes and production skills strand focuses on:

•collecting, managing and analysing data, which involves the nature and properties of data, how they are collected and interpreted using a range of digital systems and peripheral devices and interpreting data when creating information

•defining problems and designing digital solutions (Foundation – Year 2), which develops into defining problems and designing, implementing and evaluating solutions that have been developed by students, and evaluating how well existing information systems meet different needs (Year 3–10)

•communicating ideas and information (Foundation – Year 4), which develops into managing, creating and communicating ideas and information (Year 5–6) through to independently and collaboratively managing projects to create interactive solutions (Year 7–10). This involves creating and communicating information, especially online by creating websites, and interacting safely using appropriate technical and social protocols.

These require skills in using digital systems; and critical and creative thinking including systems, design and computational thinking.

Computational thinking

The curriculum is designed so that students will develop and use increasingly sophisticated computational thinking skills, and processes, techniques and digital systems to create solutions to address specific problems, opportunities or needs. Computational thinking is a process of recognising aspects of computation in the world and being able to think logically, algorithmically, recursively and abstractly. Students will also apply procedural techniques and processing skills when creating, communicating and sharing ideas and information, and managing projects.

Key concepts

A number of key concepts underpin the Digital Technologies curriculum. These establish a way of thinking about problems, opportunities and information systems and provide a framework for knowledge and practice. The key concepts are:

- abstraction, which underpins all content, particularly the content descriptions relating to the concepts of data representation, and specification, algorithms and implementation
- data collection (properties, sources and collection of data), data representation (symbolism and separation) and data interpretation (patterns and contexts)
- specification (descriptions and techniques), algorithms (following and describing) and implementation (translating and programming)
- digital systems (hardware, software, and networks and the internet)
- Interactions (people and digital systems, data and processes) and impacts (sustainability and empowerment).

The concepts of abstraction, data collection, representation and interpretation, specification, algorithms and implementation correspond to the key elements of computational thinking. Collectively, these concepts span the key ideas about the organisation, representation and automation of digital solutions and information. They can be explored in non-digital or digital contexts and are likely to underpin future digital systems. They provide a language and perspective that students and teachers can use when discussing digital technologies.

Abstraction

Abstraction involves hiding details of an idea, problem or solution that are not relevant, to focus on a manageable number of aspects. Abstraction is a natural part of communication: people rarely communicate every detail, because many details are not relevant in a given context. The idea of abstraction can be acquired from an early age. For example, when students are asked how to make toast for breakfast, they do not mention all steps explicitly, assuming that the listener is an intelligent implementer of the abstract instructions. Central to managing the complexity of information systems is the ability to 'temporarily ignore' the internal details of the subcomponents of larger specifications, algorithms, systems or interactions. In digital systems, everything must be broken down into simple instructions.

Data collection, representation and interpretation

The concepts that are about data focus on the properties of data, how they are collected and represented, and how they are interpreted in context to produce information. These concepts in Digital Technologies build on a corresponding statistics and probability strand in the Mathematics curriculum. The Digital Technologies curriculum provides a deeper understanding of the nature of data and their representation, and computational skills for interpreting data. The data concepts provide rich opportunities for authentic data exploration in other learning areas while developing data processing and visualisation skills. Data collection describes the numerical, categorical and textual facts measured, collected or calculated as the basis for creating information and its binary representation in digital systems. Data collection is addressed in the processes and production skills strand. Data representation describes how data are represented and structured symbolically for storage and communication, by people and in digital systems, and is addressed in the knowledge and understanding strand. Data interpretation describes the processes of extracting meaning from data and is addressed in the processes and production strand.

Specification, algorithms and implementation

The concepts specification, algorithms and implementation focus on the precise definition and communication of problems and their solutions. This begins with the description of tasks and concludes in the accurate definition of computational problems and their algorithmic solutions. This concept draws from logic, algebra and the language of mathematics, and can be related to the scientific method of recording experiments in science. Specification describes the process of defining and communicating a problem precisely and clearly. For example, explaining the need to direct a robot to move in a particular way. An algorithm is a precise description of the steps and decisions needed to solve a problem. Algorithms will need to be tested before the final solution can be implemented. Anyone who has followed or given instructions, or navigated using directions, has used an algorithm. These generic skills can be developed without programming. For example, students can follow the steps within a recipe or describe directions to locate items. Implementation describes the automation of an algorithm, typically by using appropriate software or writing a computer program. These concepts are addressed in the processes and production skills strand.

Digital systems

The digital systems concept focuses on the components of digital systems: hardware and software (computer architecture and the operating system), and networks and the internet (wireless, mobile and wired networks and protocols). This concept is addressed in both strands. The broader definition of an information system that includes data, people, processes and digital systems falls under the interactions and impacts concept below.

Interactions and impacts

The interactions and impacts concepts focus on all aspects of human interaction with and through information systems, and the enormous potential for positive and negative economic, environmental and social impacts enabled by these systems. Interactions and impacts are addressed in the processes and production skills strand. Interactions refers to all human interactions with information systems, especially user interfaces and experiences, and human–human interactions including communication and collaboration facilitated by digital systems. This concept also addresses methods for protecting stored and communicated data and information. Impacts describes analysing and predicting the extent to which personal, economic, environmental and social needs are met through existing and emerging digital technologies; and appreciating the transformative potential of digital technologies in people's lives. It also involves consideration of the relationship between information systems and society and in particular the ethical and legal obligations of individuals and organisations regarding ownership and privacy of data and information.

Types of digital solutions

Across each band, students will create digital solutions that will use data, require interactions with users and within systems, and will have impacts on people, the economy and environments. Solutions may be developed using combinations of readily available hardware and software applications, and/or specific instructions provided through programming. Some examples of solutions are instructions for a robot, an adventure game, products featuring interactive multimedia including digital stories, animations and websites.

Years 3 and 4 Content Descriptions

Digital Technologies Knowledge and Understanding	Digital Technologies Processes and Production Skills
Identify and explore a range of digital systems with peripheral devices for different purposes, and transmit different types of data.	Collect, access and present different types of data using simple software to create information and solve problems.
Recognise different types of data and explore how the same data can be represented in different ways.	Define simple problems, and describe and follow a sequence of steps and decisions (algorithms) needed to solve them.
	Implement simple digital solutions as visual programs with algorithms involving branching (decisions) and user input.
	Explain how student solutions and existing information systems meet common personal, school or community needs.
	Plan, create and communicate ideas and information independently and with others, applying agreed ethical and social protocols.