Studying in A Digital Age: The Module Objectives

So Rafe, tell me why do you think this module is so important for our student's development of their digital skills?

Well, I think at the moment you find that students operate in a digital world a lot of the time. But I think there's a difference between digital experience of that kind and what we're calling digital literacy within the module. So there is an academic conventions and etiquette about working in a collaborative way online. And also just searching well online that students will need to pick up.

What do you think the three main things that students will get out of this module?

Well, I think one of the first things is to think about welcoming them into the community of the University. So as well as getting used to this kind of space around us, we'll have set up a number of virtual communities really for them to get used. So for example, the virtual learning environment, Leeds For Life, the Portal. They're all spaces in which students interact online.

The second I suppose is a bit more strategic. So they'll need to know how to research online, interact online, a certain etiquette, a certain set of skills that they'll need to perform well.

OK. That's a strong reason to engage with, isn't it? That you'll probably do better in your modules and your degree overall by having a good understanding of digital literacy.

And I think that's the thing. So on one level they can just dive into some of these platforms, experiment with them. But on another they can be very strategic about it and go well, this means I'll get a better degree.

OK. And so the third thing. What was the third area of benefit for them?

Well, I think just being a critical scholar. So one of the big things for me about this module is it will train students to judge online material, to critique it, and to value it in a certain way, which means they'll be better academics.

So many students, Rafe, already have a social networks account. They'll be used to posting comments online and interacting with people in online communities. How is this module going to develop those skills to help them become a digital professional and a digital scholar?

Well, I think it's important for them to realise as students that they can use learning in a social way. They can enter into learning in a social way online as well. So we'll on this module be given the chance to not just comment, but to post, to enter into online discussion fora, and even to collaborate on building a wiki.

So one of the reasons I know you wanted to create this module, Rafe, was to introduce students to the wider
world of digital resources and opportunities. So do you want to just give a flavor of what kind of things students will be finding out about?

So we'll start from the internal platforms and resources that they have in the University. So we'll start with the virtual learning environment, the library resources, which are massive and rich here. But as they grow in confidence and sophistication, they'll also be prompted to explore beyond the University. And so we'll be giving them pathway to trust and judge and critique external resources as well.