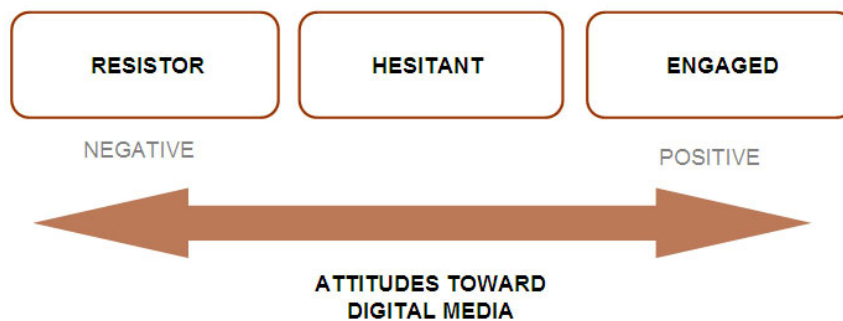


Annex D: Digital Literacy Attitudinal Archetypes

The Report of the Digital Britain Media Literacy Working Group identifies a series of attitudinal archetypes in relation to digital media and argues that understanding these different attitude types helps in developing strategies to strengthen literacy levels.⁹⁶ Different attitude types are identifiable at various stages of literacy and as such require resources suited to their needs. The attitudinal segments identified in the *Digital Britain* report include the following: Engaged, Economisers, Pragmatists, Hesitants and Resistors. In order to simplify this discussion, we will focus primarily on the three main segments: Engaged, Hesitants and Resistors.

The gaps in attitudes toward digital media are often related to age, with Resistors being the oldest segment of the population and Engaged, the youngest.



- **The Engaged** – especially adolescents and teens – have the strongest relationship with digital media: they are heavy users of the technology and are enthusiastic about how it fits into their lives. Engaged have the potential to add the most economic value, functioning comfortably as both creators and consumers of digital content, tools and interaction. This may be a more economically viable group to target with digital literacy initiatives, as they are easy to reach through school curriculum.

These users usually have basic “use” skills, but may lack life experience and maturity – making them vulnerable to potential risks and privacy issues. Increased literacy, in the form of critical evaluation, awareness of risks, and ability to create, is most important for this group.

- **The Hesitants** are in the mid-age range between Engaged and Resistors, with 53 per cent between the ages of 35 and 64. Hesitants are aware that they are not getting the most out of technology but at the same time tend to dismiss the potential benefits. A Hesitant could be characterized as someone who uses e-mail when necessary for work but is not comfortable experimenting with new forms of digital media beyond the bare minimum needed to complete a specific, practical task. This attitude is often due to a lack of confidence in using digital tools, and a lack of awareness of the benefits.

96. Section 5.6. An alternative attitudinal breakdown used by the FCC in the report on Broadband Adoption and Use in America (pg. 6) is Digitally Distant, Digital Hopefuls, Digitally Uncomfortable, Near Converts. The age and types of barriers to adoption are similar to the categories and analysis we use above.



Hesitants are the most likely to profit from digital literacy support. Literacy initiatives for this segment should focus on all three elements of digital literacy, from basic use through critical evaluation to creation.

Another important consideration with this group is that the younger range of Hesitants – ages 35-45 – is likely to include parents of children who may be outpacing them in Internet use. There is no doubt that adults want to be involved in guiding their children’s online explorations: in a 2005 survey conducted by Ipsos Reid for Media Awareness Network, 91 per cent of parents interviewed believed themselves to be most responsible for teaching young people to think critically and make good decisions about popular media including the Internet. If “Hesitant” parents are to successfully do this, they need digital literacy skills of their own and the confidence and proficiency in digital technology to effectively guide their children.⁹⁷

- **The Resistors**, mainly those over the age of 65, display little or no interest in changing their relationship to technology and do not see the value of incorporating digital media into their lives. They believe that the risks, costs and nuisance factors far outweigh the benefits. A successful digital literacy campaign for this segment has first to provide a convincing value proposition that presents compelling reasons for them to become interested in using digital media technologies.

It is important to identify and differentiate Resistors who appear to be resisting technology adoption due to economic factors. Literacy initiatives for this segment must not only promote the benefits of digital literacy but also provide the public resources to make access to digital technologies more affordable.

97. Media Awareness Network (2005). Survey of Parents.