

# Personal Knowledge Management Self-Assessment

[http://phpartners.org/html/Self\\_Assessment\\_Larsson.html](http://phpartners.org/html/Self_Assessment_Larsson.html)

## Introduction

This self-assessment instrument is intended to help you determine how comfortable you feel with your information and idea management skills. It is organized into seven competencies as listed at the beginning of each section. Each competency has 10 sub-competencies. The seven main competencies have been adapted for this self-assessment from work done by Paul Dorsey, Millikin University, Decatur, IL.

The competencies include: accessing information and ideas; evaluating information and ideas; organizing information and ideas; analyzing information and ideas; conveying information and ideas; collaborating around information and ideas; and securing information and ideas. This instrument follows this list of competencies. This instrument does **not** need to be completed during the class; take it home with you to complete later.

## Instructions

Be **honest** with yourself.

Take the self-assessment and assign yourself a score for each section. Score yourself this way:

**5** = I can do this well enough to teach someone else

**4** = I can do this

**3** = I could figure out how to do this on my own

**2** = I've done this, but don't think I could do it again

**1** = I don't know how to do this

Pencil in the score in the column titled **Score** then sum your scores. Compare your score to the totals to see if you are competent or need additional learning.

Do **not** turn in the self-assessment. It is for your eyes and information only.

## Getting Additional Information

If your overall score in any section is **less than 40** and you need additional materials on any competency area, contact Laura Larsson <[larsson@u.washington.edu](mailto:larsson@u.washington.edu)>. She is writing training material to accompany this instrument.

1. Accessing Information and Ideas	Score
a. I can ask focused questions to inform my search for information.	
b. I feel comfortable using my computer to retrieve information I need to accomplish my work.	
c. I know when to use the Web to search for information and when to use a factual database like PubMed and I understand what types of information appear on the Web and in a factual database.	
d. I can use an online library catalog to retrieve books, journals and journal articles.	
e. I know the difference between an online search engine, a directory of sites, and a metasearch engine.	
f. I can select appropriate content to support my research.	
g. When I find a site on the Web that I like or that has the information I need, I have bookmarked that site so that I can go back to it later without having to re-enter the entire address (URL).	
h. Once I have located relevant data or documents on the Web, I can download and view those documents, graphics or presentations.	
i. I have successfully searched for a topic in one of the large health-related bibliographic databases (eg, PubMed, CHID, TOXNET, and similar databases) and have retrieved relevant information effectively.	
j. I understand what Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) are and how to use MeSH in conjunction with relevant Boolean operators (AND, OR, NOT) to compose a PubMed search for the best evidence on a topic.	
<b>TOTAL SCORE Retrieving information and ideas (possible total of 50)</b>	

### Scoring Section 1

If you scored **above 45 points** on this section, you probably have the skill level you need.

If you scored **between 40 and 45 points**, you seem to have a significant amount of familiarity with these competencies. We suggest you continue to give yourself opportunities to learn more about those competencies where you did not score 4 or above.

If you scored **below 40**, you should consider getting additional training and/or experience.

2. Evaluating Information and Ideas	Score
a. I know when it is appropriate to use scholarly books or journal articles for a project and when to	

use the more popular information from the Web.	
b. I know when to use primary sources of information and when to use secondary sources.	
c. I can select information appropriate to the question(s) I am researching.	
d. I know which public health and related Web sites have quality information for my work.	
e. I can evaluate the information I find on the Web for its quality; i.e., evaluate its authority, accuracy, objectivity, coverage, currency and design for my own information needs and for referring clients or patients to.	
f. I can distinguish between fact, advocacy and opinion and can identify incorrect or misleading information on the Web.	
g. If I do not know what a word or phrase means, I know how and where to find a definition online.	
h. I keep track of where I have looked so that I can replicate my search on a topic at a later time.	
i. I apply the same quality standards to my own work as I do to online content.	
j. I understand the basics of evidence-based public health practice.	
<b>TOTAL SCORE Evaluating information and ideas (possible total of 50)</b>	

### Scoring Section 2

If you scored **above 45 points** on this section, you probably have the skill level you need.

If you scored **between 40 and 45 points**, you seem to have a significant amount of familiarity with these competencies. We suggest you continue to give yourself opportunities to learn more about those competencies where you did not score 4 or above.

If you scored **below 40**, you should consider getting additional training and/or experience.

3. Organizing Information and Ideas	Score
a. I feel comfortable using my computer to organize information or data.	
b. I have successfully classified, organized and stored documents into folders for later retrieval.	
c. I have developed a method of organizing small pieces of text information (snippets) for future retrieval and for managing email messages.	
d. I use appropriate software applications such as a spreadsheet for simple data analysis, database managers for structured information and a word processor or an HTML editor for creating documents to organize my text information	
e. I have a system in place to record my thoughts and ideas for future retrieval.	
f. I can create, edit, and resize images/graphics for use in documents and presentations and organize and store the resulting images for future use.	
g. I can cite most documents in an appropriate style when I create a list of references or a bibliography.	
h. I keep current in my field by monitoring appropriate information sources and technologies.	
i. I can integrate prior knowledge with the new resources I have discovered in my research (i.e, I can integrate new information into my own knowledge base).	
j. I use information technology responsibly.	
<b>TOTAL SCORE Organizing information and ideas (possible total of 50)</b>	

### Scoring Section 3

If you scored **above 45 points** on this section, you probably have the skill level you need.

If you scored **between 40 and 45 points**, you seem to have a significant amount of familiarity with these competencies. We suggest you continue to give yourself opportunities to learn more about those competencies where you did not score 4 or above.

If you scored **below 40**, you should consider getting additional training and/or experience.

4. Analyzing Information and Ideas	Score
a. I feel comfortable using my computer to analyze data and information.	
b. I can extract and manipulate data and information in a variety of formats.	
c. I know what a spreadsheet is, why spreadsheets are used in public health for data analysis and data visualization, and how to use a spreadsheet efficiently.	
d. I can ask relevant questions of my data.	
e. I can determine which information I have gathered satisfies the research question or information need and provides appropriate evidence for the topic.	
f. I use diverse sources of information to answer questions and compare information from these sources carefully to get the best or most appropriate.	
g. The information/data I use has been gleaned from diverse sources and disciplines (if appropriate).	

h. I have extracted data from the National Center for Health Statistics CD-ROMs or from their Web site or from local or state assessment data to prove or disprove hypotheses through analysis of appropriately selected data.	
i. I know when and where to incorporate data into an assessment document article, or presentation.	
j. I know that Geographic Information Systems can be used to map and analyze spatial data to display health problems or concerns.	
<b>TOTAL SCORE Analyzing information and ideas (possible total of 50)</b>	

#### Scoring Section 4

If you scored **above 45 points** on this section, you probably have the skill level you need.

If you scored **between 40 and 45 points**, you seem to have a significant amount of familiarity with these competencies. We suggest you continue to give yourself opportunities to learn more about those competencies where you did not score 4 or above.

If you scored **below 40**, you should consider getting additional training and/or experience.

5. Conveying Information and Ideas	Score
a. I feel comfortable using my computer to present data and information to others.	
b. I use a communication medium and format appropriate to my audience and to the content; i.e., I know when it is appropriate to post information to the Web and when to create a presentation or word processed document for disseminating information.	
c. I can use a word processing application to create reports and documents.	
d. I have created a presentation for a class or professional meeting using presentation software to change policy or minds, or to inform.	
e. I have incorporated images, clip art, tables and graphs into my word processed documents or presentations appropriately.	
f. I can create a PDF document from a word processed document, presentation, or spreadsheet.	
g. I can write an article for publication in a newsletter, journal or on the Web.	
h. I can convert a word processed document to an HTML document for use on the Web.	
i. I write and use culturally appropriate content written at an appropriate grade level for my audience.	
j. I can convey my thoughts verbally one-on-one or in a group.	
<b>TOTAL SCORE Presenting information and ideas (possible total of 50)</b>	

#### Scoring Section 5

If you scored **above 45 points** on this section, you probably have the skill level you need.

If you scored **between 40 and 45 points**, you seem to have a significant amount of familiarity with these competencies. We suggest you continue to give yourself opportunities to learn more about those competencies where you did not score 4 or above.

If you scored **below 40**, you should consider getting additional training and/or experience.

6. Collaborating with others on Information and Ideas	Score
a. I know when to communicate via telephone, email, chat, or instant messaging.	
b. I have set up my own email account and use it regularly.	
c. I can send, delete, reply to and print email messages can attach documents to email messages.	
d. I can download, open, view and save a document attached to an email message to a folder.	
e. I can subscribe to and unsubscribe from a professional online discussion group and have participated in the discussions in one or more professional online discussion groups.	
f. I can use my word processor's <i>Track Changes</i> feature to collaborate on authoring documents.	
g. I know how to criticize other's work constructively and am not afraid to do so.	
h. I collaborate with others in person and through appropriate technology to identify problems, analyze them and create solutions to those problems.	
i. I have filled out an online survey or poll successfully.	
j. I have actively participated in a Web-based training seminar or workshop.	
<b>TOTAL SCORE Collaborating around information and ideas (possible total of 50)</b>	

#### Scoring Section 6

If you scored **above 45 points** on this section, you probably have the skill level you need.

If you scored **between 40 and 45 points**, you seem to have a significant amount of familiarity with these competencies. We suggest you continue to give yourself opportunities to learn more about those competencies

where you did not score 4 or above.

If you scored **below 40**, you should consider getting additional training and/or experience.

7. Securing Information and Ideas (Personal and Client Security)	Score
a. I change my email account and other passwords frequently (at least every 120 days) to keep those accounts secure.	
b. I password protect sensitive personal data and do not share my passwords with colleagues.	
c. I do not put my passwords where others can find them (i.e., I do not write them down in my card file or post on my computer).	
d. I back up my important documents regularly to another disk or to CD-ROM to protect my work.	
e. Many software applications enable users to make backup copies of important documents. I have enabled the backup feature of selected applications as I work on critical documents .	
f. I understand the difference between backing up (current information) and archiving (old information) and when to archive or backup my work.	
g. I follow HIPAA standards and regulations in relation to personal health data.	
h. I can empty the disk and memory cache on my browser to free up space on my hard drive and to keep the casual browser from seeing the Web sites I have visited in my search for information.	
i. I understand the (increased) risks to privacy, loss of data, and to intellectual property rights associated with information environments relying on electronic technologies.	
j. I use information ethically (i.e., I cite where I got information/data from and respect the intellectual property rights of others).	
<b>TOTAL SCORE Securing information and ideas</b>	

#### Scoring Section 7

If you scored **above 45 points** on this section, you probably have the skill level you need.

If you scored **between 40 and 45 points**, you seem to have a significant amount of familiarity with these competencies. We suggest you continue to give yourself opportunities to learn more about those competencies where you did not score 4 or above.

If you scored **below 40**, you should consider getting additional training and/or experience.

**Thank you for your perseverance! Have fun learning more.**

---

Source of Seven Information Competencies: Paul Dorsey, Millikin University, Decatur, IL. Dorsey (<http://www.millikin.edu/webmaster/seminar/pkm.html>)

Self-Assessment developed by Laura Larsson with suggestions from colleagues, including Dr. Dorsey.

---