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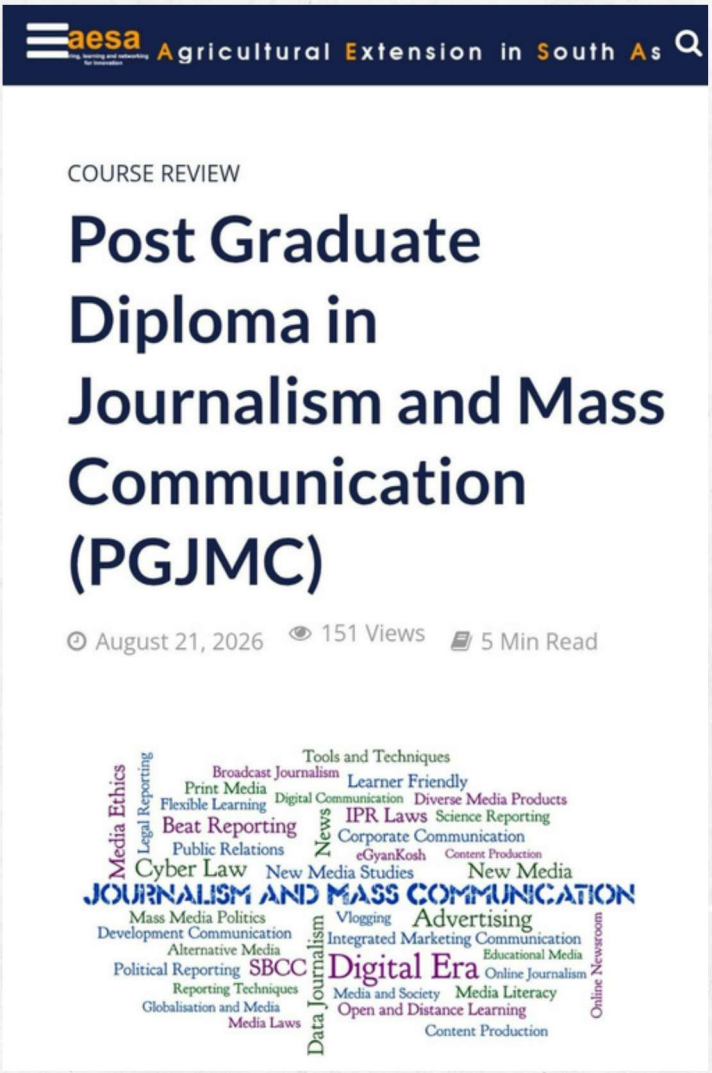
# प्रगति पथ

विश्वविद्यालय समाचार

3 Sept. 2026 / Headquarters & RCs

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## IGNOU's PGJMC Programme of SOJNMS Receives Spotlight on AESA Platform




**The Post Graduate Diploma in Journalism and Mass Communication (PGJMC)** offered by the School of Journalism and New Media Studies has been **featured in a course review** on the website of the **Agricultural Extension in South Asia (AESA)** network.

The review presents a learner's perspective on the programme, covering its academic structure, learning resources, practical components and areas for strengthening learner support.

The review was brought to the School's attention by **Prof. PVK Sasidhar (SOEDS),** also a member of AESA. The AESA platform has a reach of over **12,000 members across South Asia,** including **policy makers** in the **Government of India** and **NITI Aayog.** The School of Journalism and New Media Studies has completed **17 years** of its journey. Over the years, the quality of teaching and the work of its learners have contributed to the

## WHAT IS AESA?

**The Agricultural Extension in South Asia (AESA)** network was established in 2013 to meet the demand for a network of those interested in **extension and advisory services (EAS).** AESA is currently **the only regional network** available for extension stakeholders in South Asia to share knowledge and experiences on EAS. Over the years, AESA has expanded its contributions by **strengthening knowledge management, promoting new capacities, engaging in policy advocacy, strengthening research,** and **developing networks** at the regional level. AESA is part of the **Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services (GFRAS).** The AESA Secretariat is hosted at the **Centre for Research on Innovation and Science Policy (CRISP).**

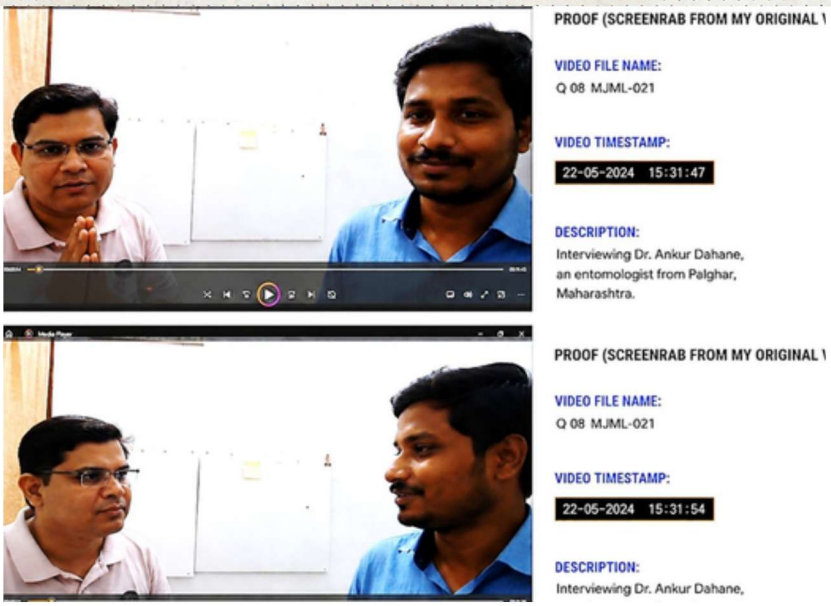
## WHAT DOES AESA DO?

Among its various long and short term goals, AESA works on establishing country forums, knowledge sharing, resource generation and capacity building. It also conducts need assessment studies and reviews, develops extension certification mechanisms and conducts evaluation studies. The course review of the **Post Graduate Diploma in Journalism and Mass Communication (PGJMC)** was featured on the **AESA website** on **21 August 2026.**

***https://aesanetwork.org/pg-diploma-in-journalism-mass-communication/***

## POST GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATION

The Post Graduate Diploma in Journalism and Mass Communication (PGJMC) is a **40 credit programme** offered in three languages, **English, Hindi** and **Tamil.** The maximum duration for completing the programme is **three years.** The programme is offered in **ODL** and **online modes.** A stand alone diploma programme, PGJMC is also the first year of the Master's programme in Journalism and Mass Communication.




### ABOUT THE LEARNER

***Dr. Basu Anand is a scholar from IIT Guwahati and an AESA volunteer. His work focuses on research, data analysis and technical writing, with active contributions to academic outreach, science communication and volunteer initiatives.***

## Programme Feedback on AESA

**Dr. Anand** found the programme **learner friendly** and **appreciated the YouTube lectures** by **experienced faculty,** the resources available on **eGyanKosh,** and the **flexibility** to choose and transfer study centres. He felt that the experience demonstrated **IGNOU's commitment to providing a flexible, learner centric system.** The programme also provided opportunities to create diverse media products. Dr. Anand developed a television news feature on the contemporary issue of **"Water Crisis",** prepared a **radio morning news bulletin for Navsari** featuring local news, produced a field visit vlog titled **"Lives",** hosted an interview programme named **"Voices of Change",** and created a special report titled **"Bihar Say",** focusing on the impact of contract farming on farmers in his native village, Patut, in Bihar's Patna district.

He also designed sample news webpages covering **business, lifestyle, national affairs** and **sports,** prepared original photographs for practical evaluation, and created video thumbnails and cover pages. According to his review, these assignments simulated real newsroom activities and significantly improved his confidence in **content creation, interviewing, script writing, visual presentation** and **digital storytelling.**

### AESA at a Glance

***12,000+ MEMBERS The Agricultural Extension in South Asia (AESA) network reaches more than 12,000 members across South Asia, including policy makers in the Government of India and NITI Aayog.***

## From Journalism Classroom to Professional Practice

Among his favourite courses, Dr. Anand found **Broadcast** and **Online Journalism (MJM 023)** to be the **most relevant to his professional interests. T**he knowledge gained from the course now supports his work in **digital agricultural extension initiatives, his volunteer activities with AESA, and his current responsibilities in communicating research outputs, promoting institutional activities and engaging wider audiences through digital platforms.**

The programme also helped him understand how journalistic writing differs from academic writing. This included developing **concise news reports, writing effective headlines, using bylines appropriately, verifying facts,** and

## A Balanced Learner Perspective

While the review highlighted several positive aspects of the programme, it also pointed to areas where learner support could be strengthened. Dr. Anand noted that his experience with the study centre was inconsistent, as email queries and phone calls often went unanswered despite repeated attempts. He felt that greater responsiveness from study centres would substantially improve learner support.

He also highlighted the scope for strengthening interaction among learners. While the programme included counselling sessions, the review suggested that greater opportunities for learner engagement could further enrich the learning experience. **Regular virtual doubt-clearing sessions, an active online discussion forum, frequently asked questions (FAQs),** and s**ample practical reports** could greatly benefit students, particularly those entering journalism from non-media backgrounds.

**LEARNER'S VOICE**

"The practical component of PGJMC proved to be the most rewarding aspect of the programme." PGJMC required learners to produce actual media content. Although I generally devoted two to three hours every week to regular study, practical submissions required more than four hours of focused work each day for nearly two weeks, while examination preparation typically involved twelve to fifteen days of dedicated revision.

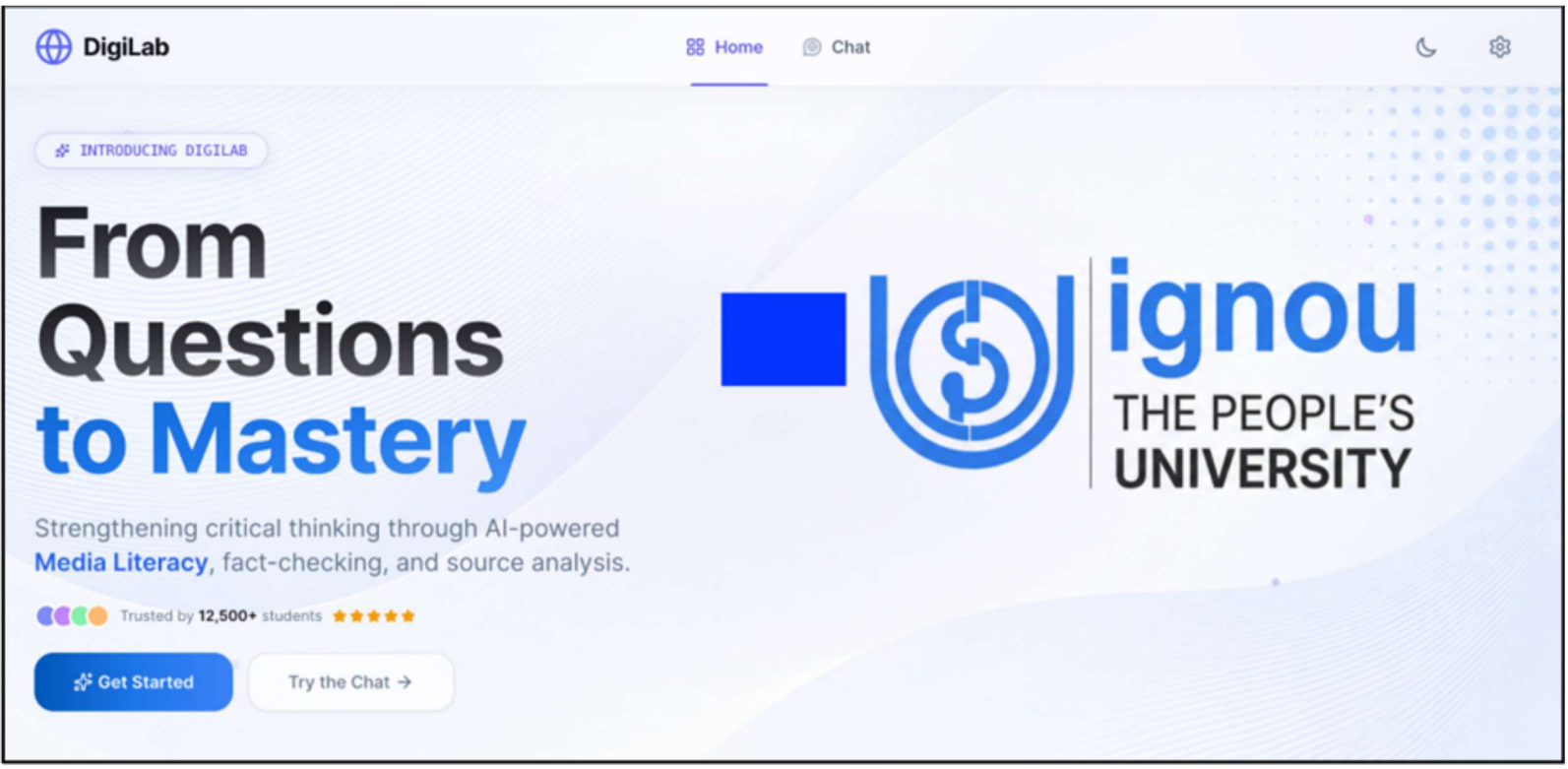
*Dr. Basu Anand*

**LEARNER'S VOICE**

"Among the practical assignments, the most memorable was conducting my first professional interview of Dr Ankur Dahane." Preparing interview questions, conducting the interview, and presenting it in journalistic format taught me how to communicate systematically, ask meaningful questions, and present information objectively, skills that continue to benefit my professional work.

*Dr. Basu Anand*

# DIGILAB: IGNOU'S OWN AI ASSISTANT FOR MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY




The DigiLab home page

Ask DigiLab a question about media, journalism or the way information travels online, and it answers in plain language — then shows you the sources it used. It is IGNOU's own AI learning assistant, built by the School of Journalism and New Media Studies under the UNESCO–IGNOU–SACTD MIL Project for South Asia, and it is now open to anyone with a browser at digilab.medialit.in.

## What is Media and Information Literacy?

Media and Information Literacy is the ability to judge what we read, watch and pass on: to tell a reported fact from a rumour, to notice how a headline has been framed, and to ask where a claim came from. Now that software can write convincing text and generate photographs of things that never happened, those habits matter more than ever. DigiLab was built to teach them — and it teaches them using AI itself.

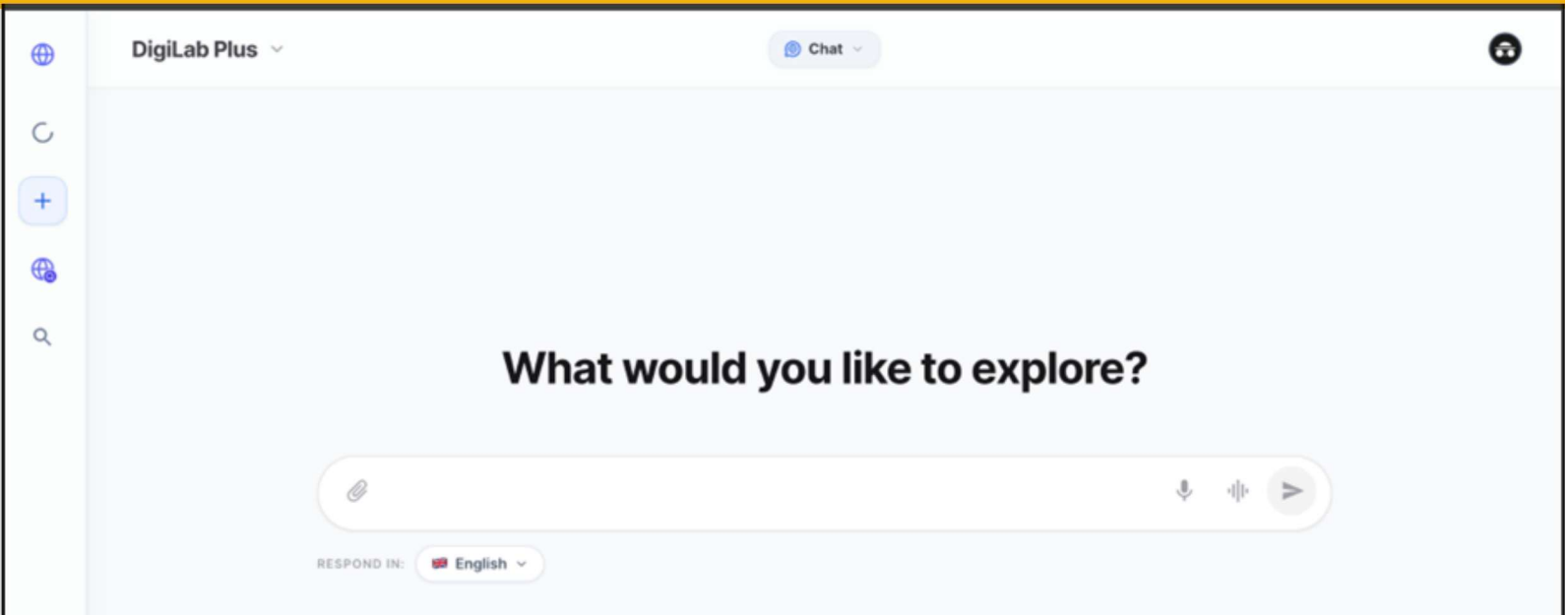
# Part of a UNESCO project for South Asia

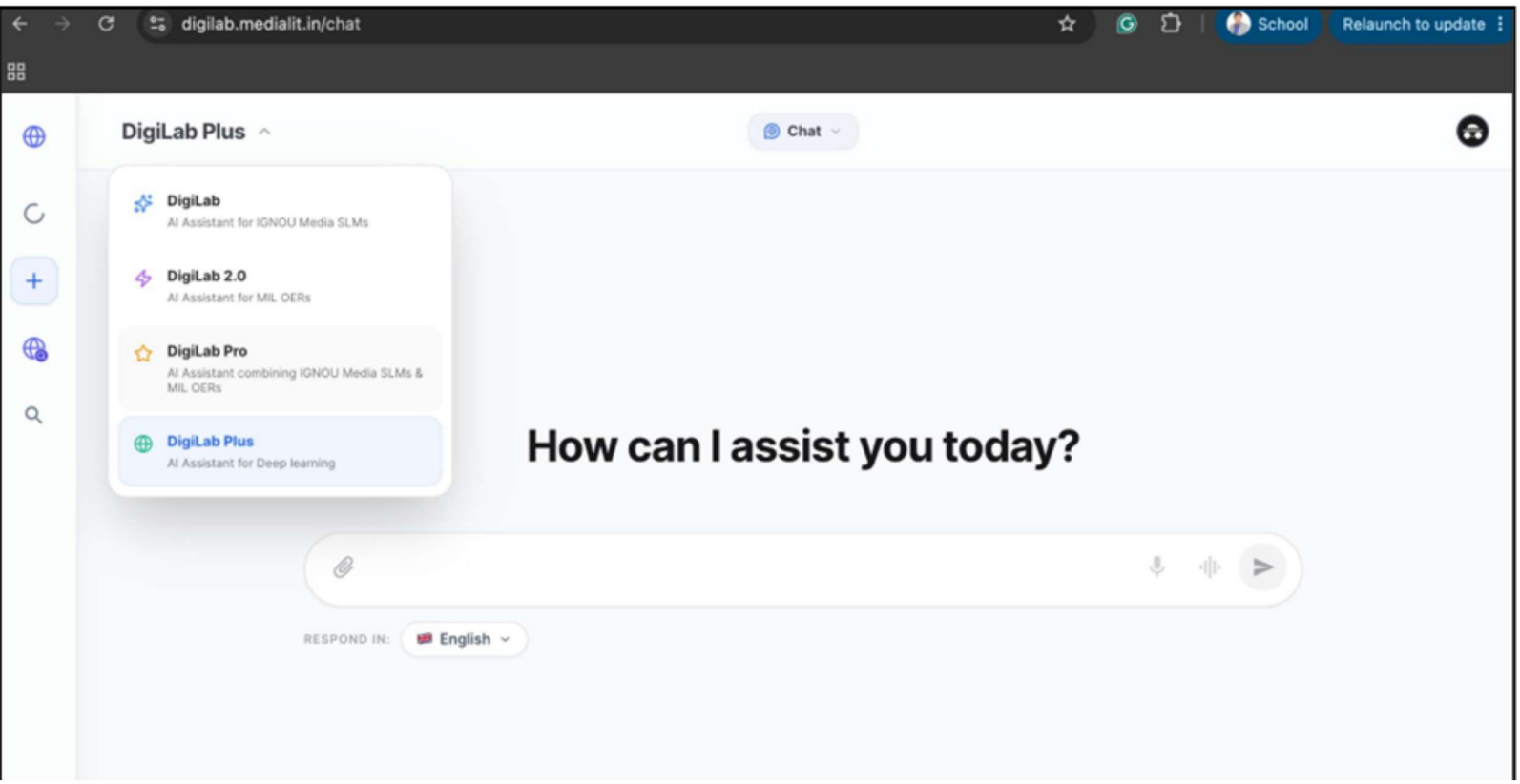
DigiLab has been developed under the **UNESCO–IGNOU–SACTD MIL Project for South Asia**, a collaboration between UNESCO, IGNOU and the South Asian Centre for Teacher Development. The project's central undertaking is the **Post Graduate Diploma in Media and Information Literacy (PGDMIL)**, a **one-year, 40-credit programme of nine courses** developed by the School of Journalism and New Media Studies. Its curriculum follows **UNESCO's Media and Information Literacy Curriculum for Teachers (2021 edition)**, "Think Critically and Click Wisely", and is structured around the **seven MIL competencies** set out there. The programme is aimed at in-service teachers and pre-service trainee teachers across South Asia, on the reasoning that a teacher who can question a source will teach a classroom to do the same.

DigiLab is not an afterthought to that project but a commitment written into it. The PGDMIL concept note proposed using AI tools to help teachers navigate learning materials, support them in their regional language contexts, and establish an online repository of open educational resources in MIL. **DigiLab and the MILE repository** are the two undertakings delivered.

## Ask a question

The assistant works like any chat window: type a question, get an answer. What differs is where the answer comes from. Four settings can be chosen from the top of the screen. The first answers from IGNOU's own Self-Learning Materials in media and journalism. The second draws on freely available media literacy teaching resources from around the world. The third combines both. The fourth, **DigiLab Plus**, is a research assistant for longer academic enquiry.

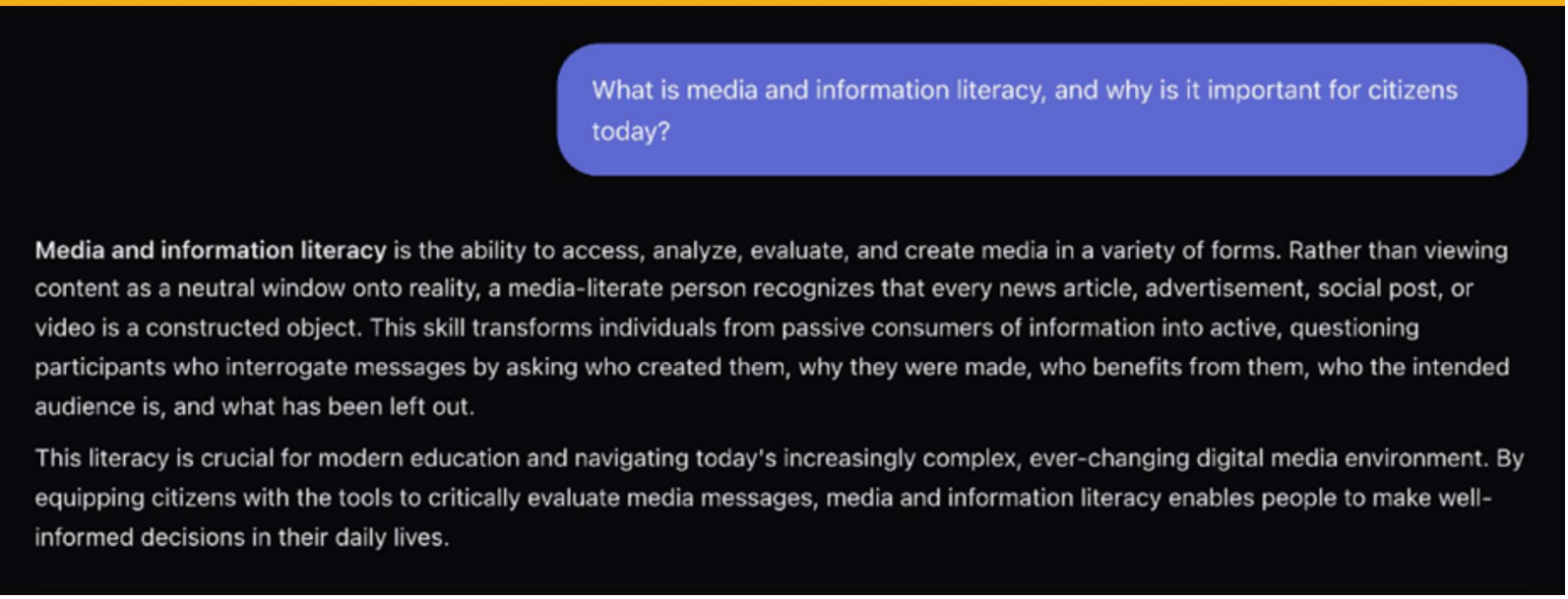


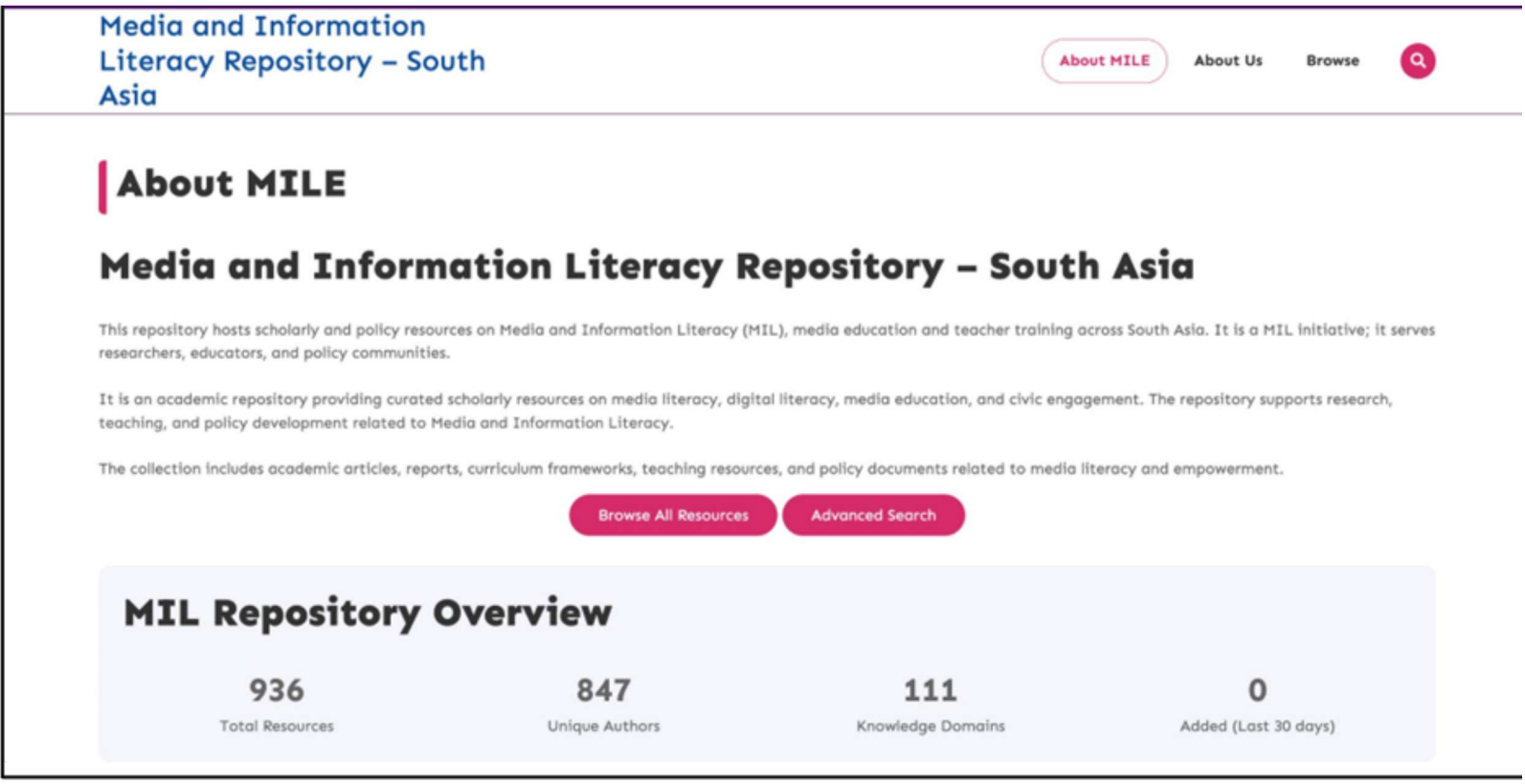



The four settings, chosen from the top of the screen

## Where the answers come from

Every answer carries numbered sources that can be opened and read. This is the real difference between DigiLab and a general chatbot: it does not answer from the open internet but from material the University has selected. Behind it sit IGNOU's media SLMs, together with an online library the School has built — the Media and Information Literacy Repository, South Asia — which now holds more than 900 resources by over 800 authors across 111 subject areas. The library feeds the assistant, and it is also open to anyone looking for reading material of their own.



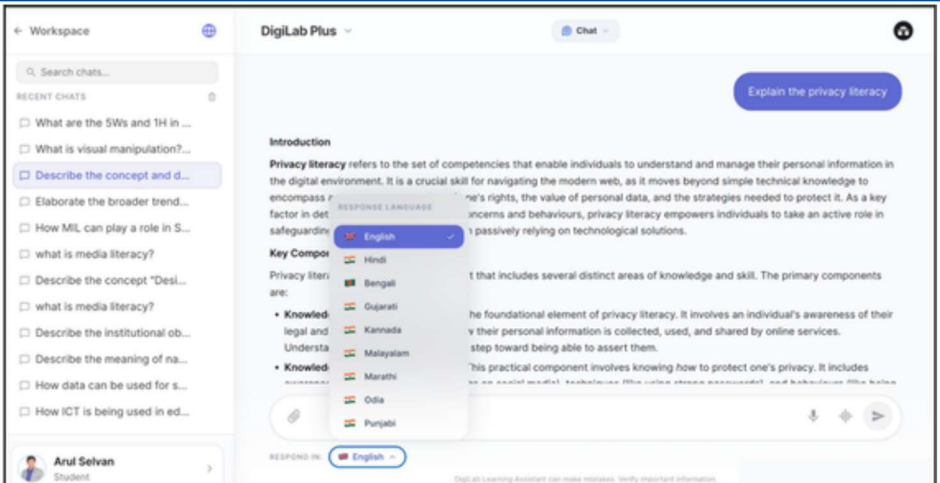


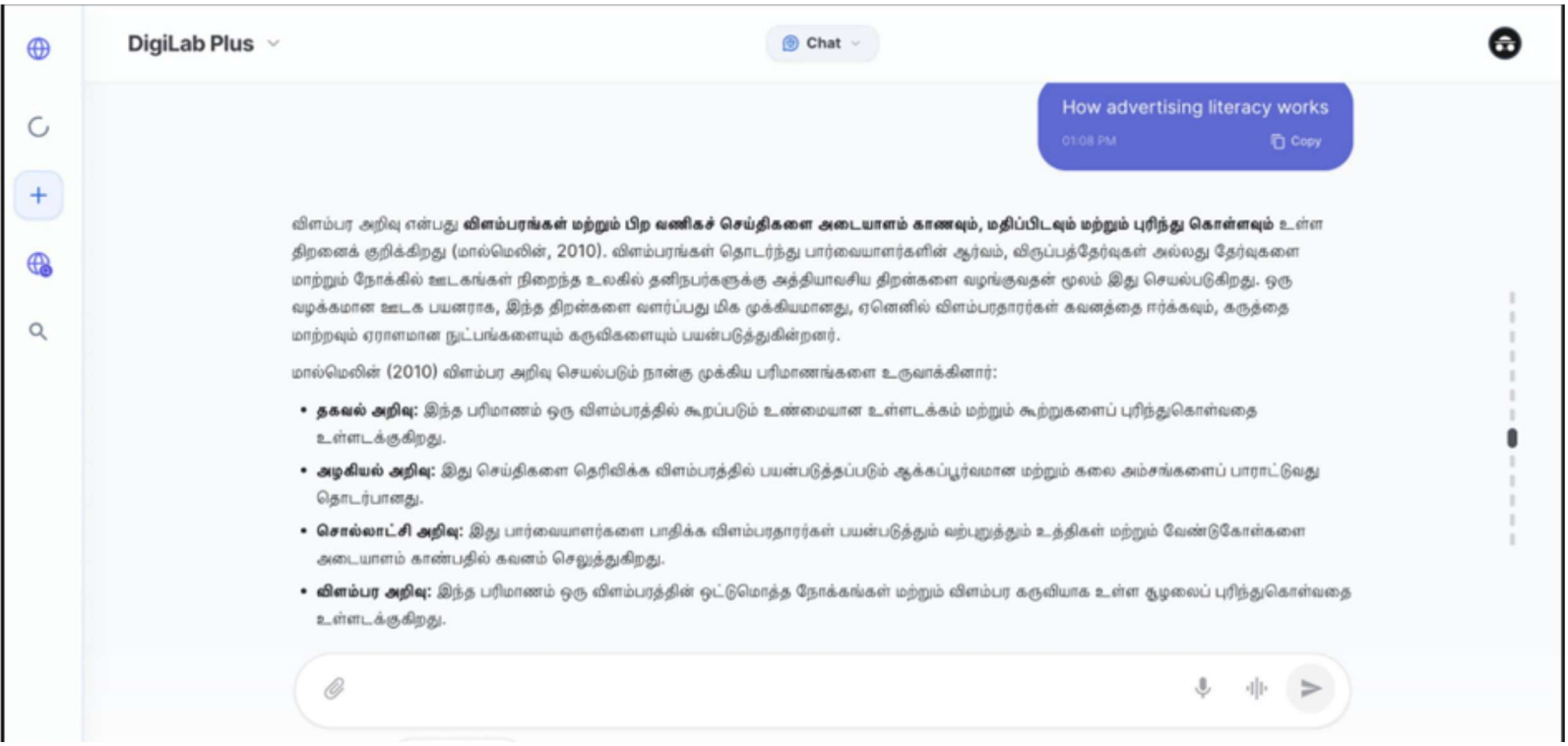

The Media and Information Literacy Repository, South Asia — the School's own open library.

**The repository is open at https://www.milsouthasia.org/mile/s/mile-repository/page/about-mile**

## In your own language

DigiLab replies in 12 Indian languages besides English: Hindi, Bengali, Tamil, Telugu, Marathi, Malayalam, Kannada, Gujarati, Odia, Punjabi, Assamese and Urdu. The learner selects the language at the bottom of the screen and asks the question in that language. Questions may also be spoken aloud instead of typed. This directly serves a project objective: PGDMIL will be offered first in English and subsequently in the regional languages of the subcontinent, and DigiLab enables a teacher to engage with the material in their own language from the outset.

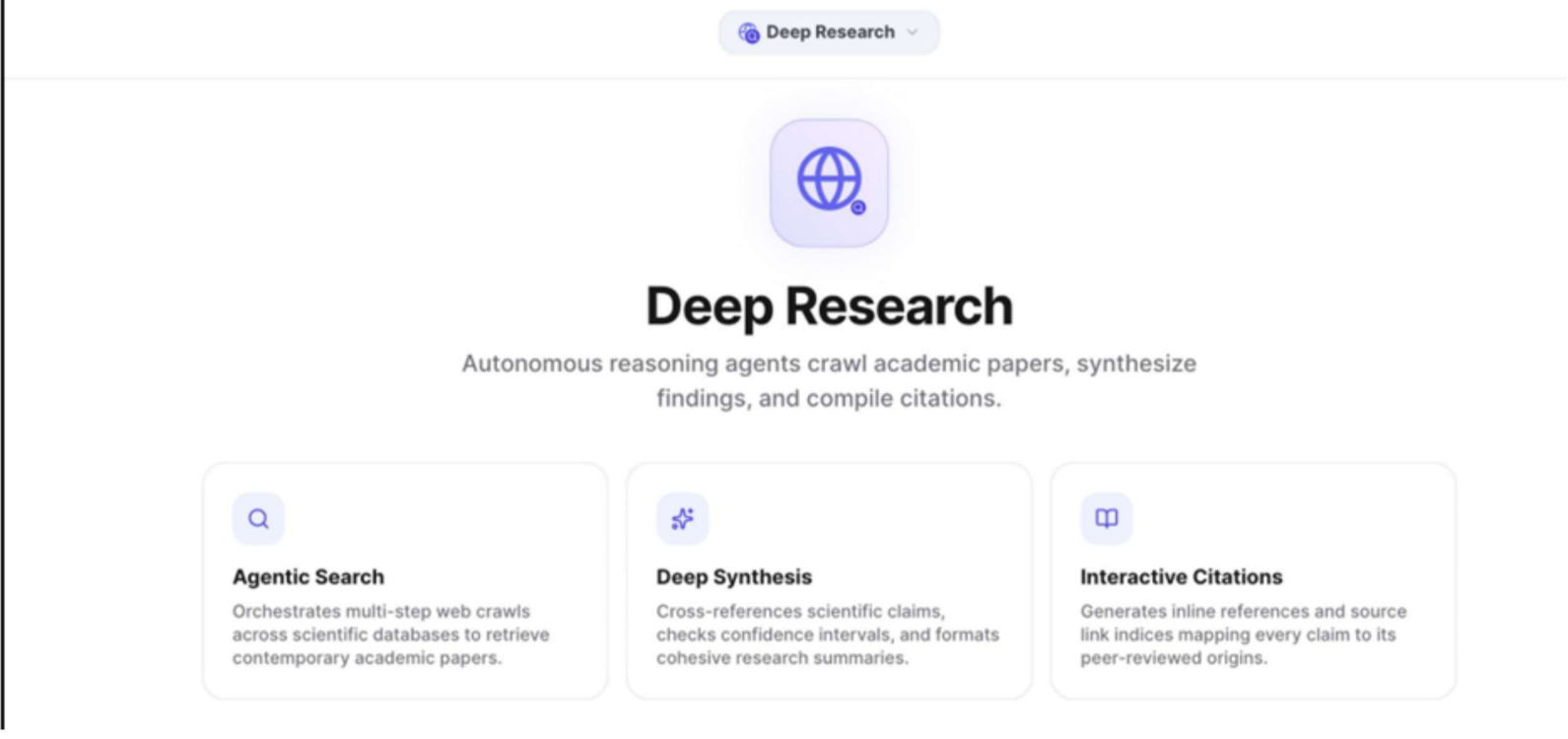





A reply delivered in Tamil.

## Going further: the research assistant

DigiLab Plus goes further than a single answer. Given a research question, it searches academic databases, compares what it finds and returns a written summary with references attached. It shows its working as it goes, so that a researcher can follow the trail rather than take the answer on trust.



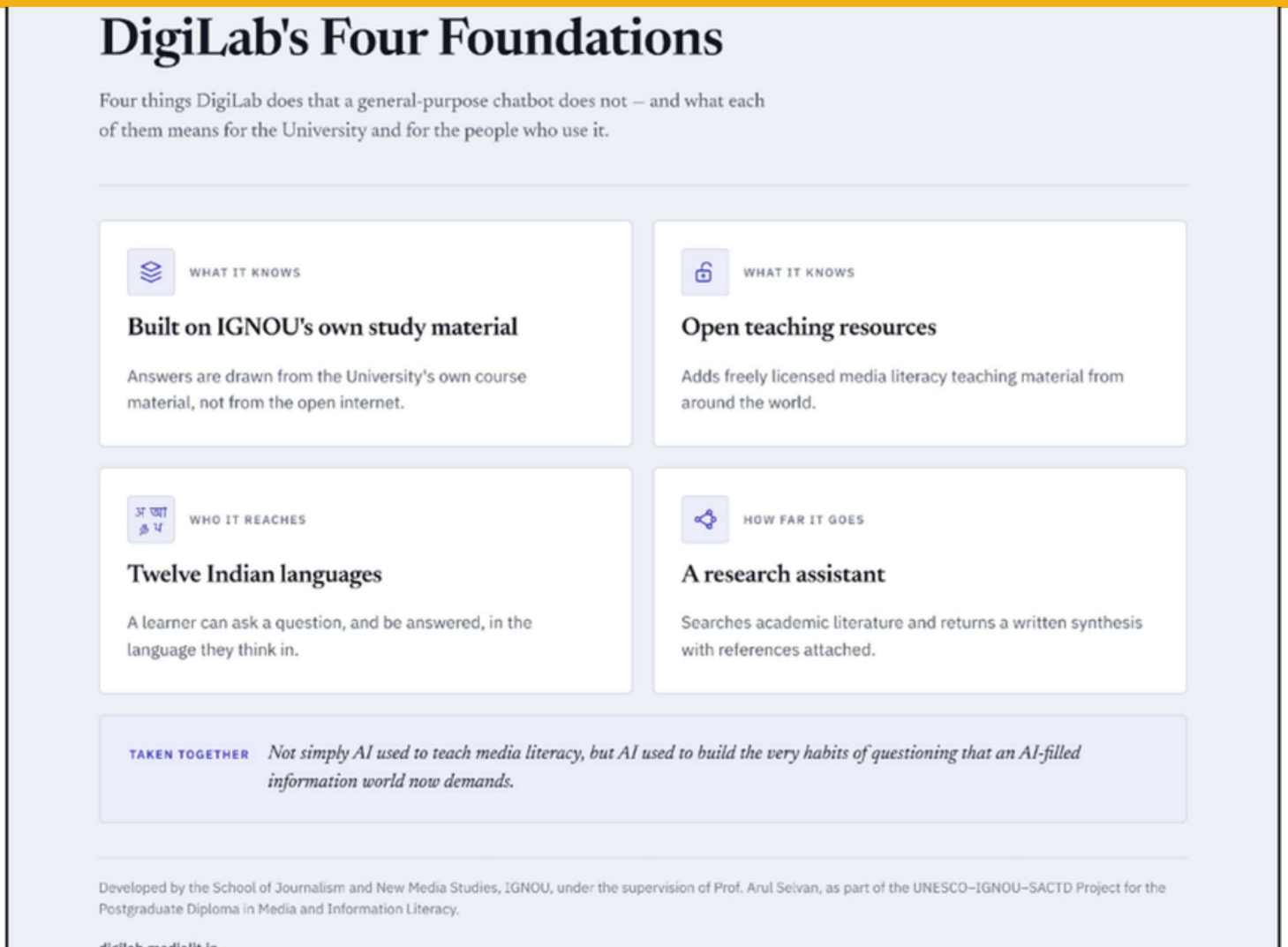
## Who can use it

**The platform is open to the whole University, and it is useful in different ways to different readers:**

- For students — ask what a concept in a unit means, and read the passage that the explanation came from.
- For teachers — gather references quickly, and see how a topic is treated across different materials.
- For researchers — use Deep Research for a first survey of the literature on a question.

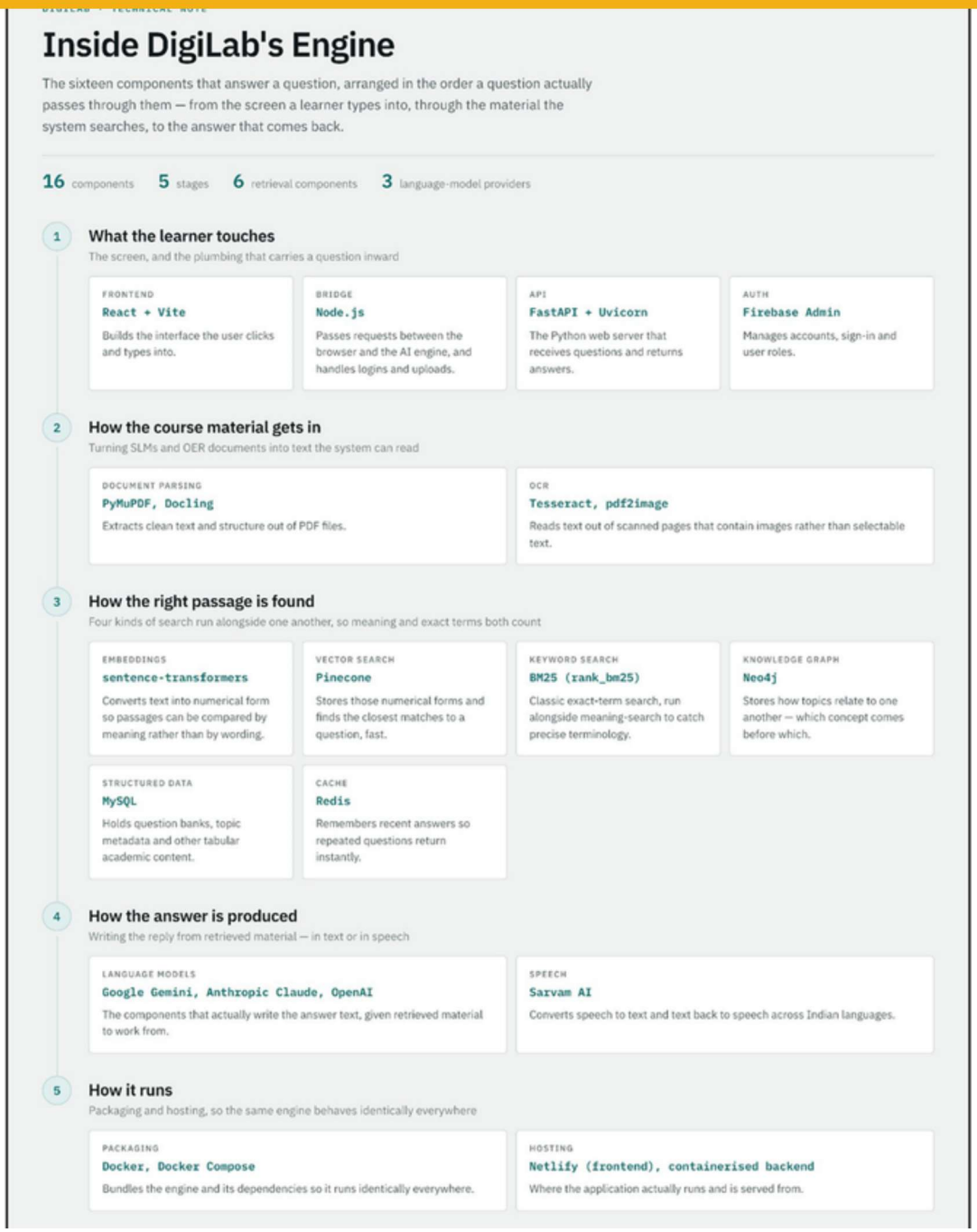
## Why the University is doing this

Generative AI, synthetic media and recommendation algorithms have changed how information reaches people and how easily it can be faked. Teaching people to question the media now means teaching them to question AI as well. That is precisely the ground UNESCO's MIL curriculum covers, and DigiLab takes the argument seriously enough to make AI the teaching instrument itself.



## How it works, in brief

For those who would like the details: sixteen pieces of software sit behind the question box. They read the PDFs of the course material, search them by meaning as well as by exact wording, and hand the relevant passages to a language model, which writes the reply. The diagram below sets out each part and what it does, in non-specialist terms.




**The sixteen components, in the order a question passes through them**

## A pilot — and an invitation

DigiLab is a pilot, and it will improve as people use it and say what is missing. As the PGDMIL moves towards launch, the assistant will grow alongside it. Colleagues across the University, in Schools, Divisions and Regional Centres alike, are invited to try it and to send their suggestions to Prof. Arul