Chapter 6 - Digital Safety and Digital Citizenship

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Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter the learner will be able to:

1. Explain key vocabulary terms, theories, and resources relating to digital citizenship and safety.
2. Compare and contrast current practices regarding ethics to practices outlined in the readings.
3. Articulate a vision for educational technology in a classroom, school, or district.
4. Summarize the chapter content.

Giving our learners the hardware and software is important, but keeping them safe and teaching them how to behave in an ethical manner is also critical. In Chapter 6 our focus turns to digital safety and digital citizenship. Let's look first at digital safety.

Digital Safety

Digital safety is everyone's concern and it's something our schools must monitor. You may have come across digital safety under other names, such as internet safety, e-safety, or cyber safety, all of which refer to staying safe online.

Being connected to the internet and through that, the world provides learners with so many experiences and resources to help

them learn and grow. But with increased connectivity comes increased risks. Scott Nelson and Sophia Latorre (2022) provide five great digital safety tips for younger learners in their article titled How to Stay Safe on the Internet (for Kids). You will gain much from reading the entire article, but here is a summary.

Tip 1 - Do not create an account for a site if you are under the age of thirteen.

Tip 2 - Avoid responding to messages from strangers or be careful if you do.

Tip 3 - Be careful when meeting with strangers.

Tip 4 - Avoid joining private forums and chat rooms.

Tip 5 - Avoid going on dating sites.

Tip 6 - Avoid accepting random friend requests on social media.

These tips just sound like common sense, but someone needs to intentionally teach them to younger learners. We can't

assume they already know these things. The reality is, they don't. Learners need to hear this from trusted adults in their lives. Otherwise, they will learn from their peers.

It is also important to talk about the risk potentials and what to do about them. These include such things as:

- online harassment and bullying
- fake news and propaganda
- predatory behaviors and online grooming
- phishing schemes
- identity theft
- sexting and relationships

These topics, while crucial, are also difficult to discuss. We need to be careful to inform without scaring. One of the best resources available to educators is [Common Sense Education](#). Their curriculum on digital safety and also digital citizenship really provide the foundation for this chapter. Let's begin our dive into digital safety by watching the following recording of a session focused on identifying strategies and dispositions that K–12 educators can use to

teach learners to think critically about the various relationships they're engaging in online. The production value is a C, but the content is definitely an A.

In many ways, being safe online is a lot like what we have always taught our learners in real life - don't talk to strangers, don't share personal information, be aware of your surroundings, don't be a bully, and report anyone who bullies you to a trusted adult. A big difference is the anonymity of the internet. Things like predatory behaviors and bullying certainly occur in the physical world, but online there is a false feeling of safety. When an older adult approaches a child in the park or the mall, warning bells go off for most kids. Online, however, the child very likely isn't aware of the age or location of the person they are talking with. That 9-year-old girl one of your learners is chatting with in a children's chat room could very well be a 50-year-old man who is intent on grooming her for nefarious purposes.

We are living in a post-truth world

In their article Seriously? Seriously., Turner and Hicks (2018) talk about living in a post-truth world. Post-truth, they write "this happens when we retweet and share without critical reading. It happens when information remains in a filter bubble. And it happens

"fake-news-detail-2" by The Public Domain Review is marked with Public Domain Mark 1.0.

when individuals and corporations can hide in anonymity while sharing fake news. As it happens, we can fall prey to misinformation." Please read this great article - seriously! Below are five classroom ideas taken directly from the Hawley-Turner and Hicks article. Be sure to click on the embedded links found in each of the five ideas.

1. Teach about filter bubbles.

Eli Pariser's warning that search algorithms may deliver information that is customized to an individual user and not representative of multiple views takes on increased weight as we curate social media streams. Rather than expanding our worldviews, the information we receive often reinforces our pre-existing beliefs. We can teach students how filter bubbles form so that they can more critically evaluate the information that they encounter. Avid Open Access (Pop the filter bubble, 2022) created a very good resource on the topic including "Ten Ways to Pop the Filter Bubble."

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10 Ways to Pop the Filter Bubble

1. Understand that information is being filtered.
2. Intentionally seek out opposing viewpoints.
3. Seek news from a variety of sources.
4. Evaluate the credibility of information sources.
5. Watch for bias.

6. Seek out less-biased news outlets.
7. Don't avoid the hard conversations; engage in them.
8. Don't unfriend those who disagree with you.
9. Listen with the intent to learn.
10. Question your own perspectives.

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2. Talk about what it means to have productive conversations in digital spaces.

Jimmy Kimmel's popular "Mean Tweets" series calls out "haters" who post cruel messages to celebrities. In less comedic fashion, PSAs like the following public service announcement (PSA). WARNING - vulgar language.

With reports of the prevalence of cyberbullying, it's clear that teens need to consider their writing in social media spaces. Kristen has started this conversation with middle school students by asking them to "write on the wall," a graffiti board where they can respond to a question, read others' writing and continue conversations. At the end of the week, the class discusses what was written, deconstructs the conversations (or lack thereof) that took place, and makes goals for having more productive conversations in their online lives.

3. Analyze social media as readers.

What persona does your feed reveal? Who are you? Val Mattesich (@VMattPV) asked her students to analyze a public social media feed in order to answer these questions. Using evidence from posts, including pictures, words, and elements of tone, students then made a claim about the persona of the individual.

4. Collect examples of social media that students read and write about.

Asking students to slow down and think about their social media interactions is a key step in helping them to monitor their reading and writing online. Finding arguments in social media is a weeklong series of activities that Turner and Hicks (2016) designed for this purpose. Perhaps even more simply, you can encourage students to collect examples from their social media lives in their reader's/writer's notebook. Placing value on these kinds of texts in the classroom can support a shift to seeing social media as a space for real reading and writing.

5. Provide constructive feedback on students' reading and writing on social media.

Though it may seem strange at first to ask students to share their social media feeds, as teachers we need to take an active role in this aspect of our students' reading and writing lives. Pew Internet just reported that 61% of parents check their children and teens' web history — and 60% examine their kids' social media profiles — but this does not mean that they are coaching them to become better readers and writers. This requires active mediation, which is not happening much at home. Ask students to take screenshots of what they are reading and writing, and invite them to reflect on those literacy choices by providing them with suggestions for curating their own social media feeds.

Eisha Bush is the Director of Educational Programs for Common Sense Media, the parent company of Common Sense Education. She a chart for an EdWeek article (Prothero, A., 2022) titled, "What's Fake on Social Media - 5 Questions for Teachers and Students to Ask as they examine images and videos on social media." The article includes a downloadable guide that would be a good addition to your classroom bulletin board.
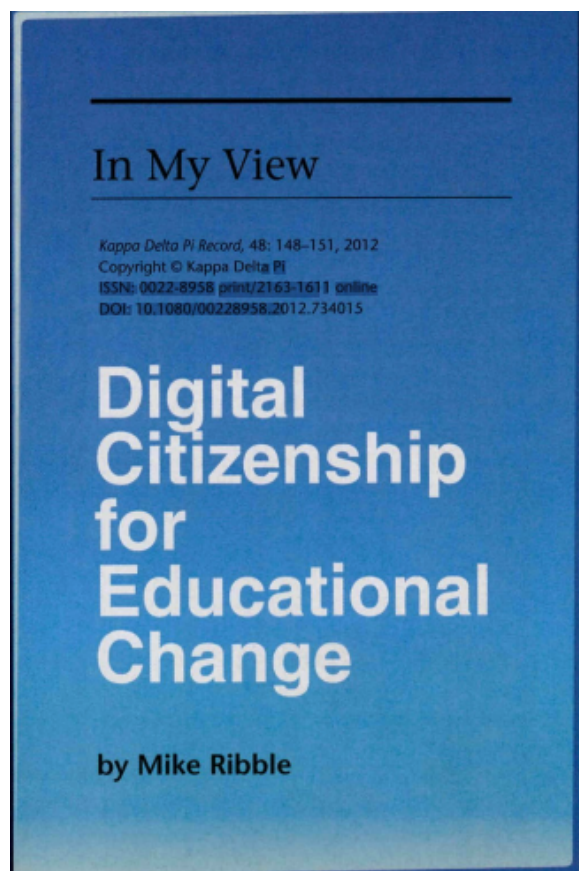
Digital Citizenship

[Watch on YouTube](#)

Common Sense Education, 2017.

The article [Seriously! Seriously](#). (Hawley-Turner & Hicks, 2017) provides a great transition from digital safety to digital citizenship. Digital safety and digital citizenship are often thought of as one in the same thing, but they are different. Let's first define what we mean by digital citizenship. For our purposes, digital citizenship refers to the responsible use of technology by anyone who uses computers, smartphones, tablets, the internet, and other devices to engage with others on any level. Chris Zook writes that to teach digital citizenship an educator should focus on seven key topics:

1. Empathy
2. How the Internet works
3. Understanding user data
4. Practicing digital literacy
5. Acknowledging the digital divide
6. Practicing digital wellness
7. Securing digital devices (Zook, 2022)

Digital Citizenship for Educational Change

by Mike Ribble

Another great view of digital citizenship comes from Dr. Mike Ribble in his Kappa Delta Pi article, Digital Citizenship for Educational Change" (2012). In that article, Ribble defines digital citizenship as the "norms of appropriate, responsible behavior with regard to technology use." Ribble also introduces a framework of nine elements that help to define and organize the topics being addressed with regard to technology. (see Figure 6.1) Note: You will need to sign into the ESU library to access the Ribble article. After you get to the resource you can download the complete pdf by clicking on the link on the left side of the page.

Figure 6.1 Nine Elements of Digital Citizenship

Digital Access:	Digital Commerce:	Digital Communication:
full electronic participation in society--allowing all technology users to participate fully in a digital society if they choose. Educators can help students understand this topic by identifying what technology tools are available at school as well as in the student's homes. Then discuss how these tools can help students in the classroom.	electronic buying and selling of goods--providing the knowledge and protection to buy and sell in a digital world. Help students identify safe websites when providing sensitive information, such as credit card numbers, by looking for https: or a lock on the URL bar or in the bottom corner of a webpage. Have students talk with their parents to identify safe sites if they purchase items online.	electronic exchange of information--understanding the options of the digital communication methods and when they are appropriate. Help students understand when different tools might be most effective, such as using e-mail for more formal communication and tweeting for casual conversations with friends.
Digital Literacy:	Digital Etiquette:	Digital Law:

process of teaching and learning about technology and the use of technology--learning about and teaching others how to use digital technologies appropriately. Provide explanations on how to use the technology tools in the classroom. Do not assume that all students are familiar with them or know how to use them appropriately. Also, take advantage of any opportunity for a "flipped classroom" moment, where students may be able to support the teacher as well as other students in the classroom.

electronic standards of conduct or procedure--being considerate of others when using digital technologies. Explain that technology use is often personal, but its use can affect others (e.g., talking loudly on a cell phone around others). Allow students to provide experiences they have had with technology and discuss how situations might have been handled better.

electronic responsibility for actions and deeds--having an awareness of laws (rules, policies) that govern the use of digital technologies. Discuss with students the technology rules that are in the school as well as in their homes. Have them explain why these rules are necessary.

Digital Rights and Responsibilities:

those requirements and freedoms extended to everyone in a digital world--protecting the digital rights of others while defending individual rights. Help students to see that technology provides many privileges; and to keep those privileges, students need to facilitate their own and others' use of technology in an appropriate manner.

Digital Health and Wellness:

physical and psychological well-being in a digital technology world--understanding the risks (both physically and psychologically) that may accompany the use of digital technologies. Identify with students how much technology may be too much (e.g., sitting for long periods of time, eye strain) and how they can balance its use with other activities.

Digital Security (self-protection):

electronic precautions to guarantee safety--protecting personal information while taking precautions to protect others' data as well. Provide examples of not sharing and protecting information online; define how much information may be too much.

According to Ribble and Bailey (2007), the purpose of the nine elements is to "help educators better understand the variety of topics that constitute digital citizenship and to provide an organized way to address them" (p.11). This becomes a starting point for preparing learners in a digital world. Some of these elements are best addressed by teachers and others by administrators, but all should be part of a discussion when developing a comprehensive district-wide digital citizenship policy.

When you look at Ribble's Nine Elements, the seven topics in Turner and Hick's article, or the six tips from the Nelson and Latorre article it seems overwhelming. Unfortunately, many people who have taken this course in the past don't see very much of this addressed in their district's policies or curriculum. Many who say their district does include digital safety and digital citizenship say it is being addressed with a statement learners and their parents have to sign at the beginning of the year, acknowledging they have read the policy on safety. Frequently the school's library media specialist teaches a few classes during the year.

Common Sense Education to the Rescue

We have looked at some of the other work from Common Sense Education in previous chapters. They also address digital citizenship in a thorough manner. Their Digital Citizenship Curriculum was designed and developed in partnership with Project Zero at the Harvard Graduate School of Education -- and guided by research with thousands of educators. Each digital citizenship lesson takes on real challenges and digital dilemmas that students face today, giving them the skills they need to succeed as digital learners, leaders, and citizens tomorrow (Common Sense Education, n.d.). They have created ready-to-teach lessons for all grade levels, K-12. Every educator should explore the lessons appropriate for the grade(s) they teach. Think of how you can integrate these lessons directly into your classroom.

Copyright and Fair Use

Copyright is designed to protect the intellectual property of the creator of such work. Copyright law as we know it today was codified in the United States in the Copyright Act of 1976. Just a few things have changed since 1976 and the law has struggled to keep up. Many educators believe that they are permitted to copy and use any material as long as it is in their classroom for educational purposes. This is only partially true. Fair use places conditions on what qualifies as fair use. The conditions are:

1. the purpose and character of the use (commercial or educational, transformative or reproductive, political);
2. the nature of the copyrighted work Is it fictional or factual? What is the degree of creativity);
3. the amount and substantiality of the portion of the original work used; and
4. the effect of the use upon the market or potential market for the original work.

For example, when I was with McREL International I co-authored several books. Fair use would apply if an educator used some of the bullet points from a chapter as they provided professional development for their staff. If that same educator then was asked to present a similar presentation in another district and charged a fee they would be required to seek and be granted permission to use the material. Some teachers believe it is permissible to copy worksheets from a workbook they legally own and distribute those copies to their students. A common excuse given is financial. The teacher or school just can't afford to purchase a workbook for every student. This would not be fair use. It violates points 3 and 4 above. The worksheets are a substantial part of a workbook and distributing copies rather than purchasing the workbook deprives the author and publisher of income. Copyright and Creativity designed a great flowchart infographic explaining the conditions of fair use.

If you would like to learn more, visit any or all of these resources:

- [Copyright and Creativity of Ethical Digital Citizens](#)
- [A Teacher's Guide to Copyright and Fair Use](#) by Karen Lagola
- [Teaching Kids About Copyright & Piracy](#) from Common Sense Media
- [Copyright Basics for Online Educators](#), video from Temple University (video below)

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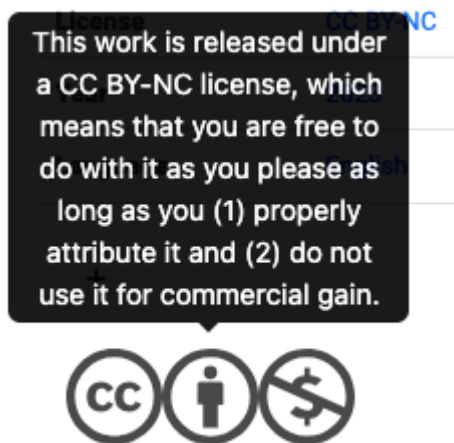
Summary

Chapter 6 covered a lot of material. Honestly, we could spend the entire course working through digital safety and digital citizenship. We end this chapter with a couple of key points.

1. Every district should develop and monitor a comprehensive digital safety/citizenship policy. Beginning with a blank sheet of paper is difficult, so below are some examples of what a comprehensive policy might contain, understand that every district is unique.
   - [Strawberry Fields High School - Chandigarh, India](#)
   - [Peel District School Board - Ontario, Canada](#)
   - [Ft. Bend Independent School District - Sugar Land, TX](#) (notice how this one is phrased in the negative)
2. Everyone has a role to play in teaching and modeling digital safety and digital citizenship - administrators, educators, learners, and parents.

The first six chapters of this book have been loaded with information. In the final chapter, it is time to put it all together. I sense a project coming.

For Discussion

- What did you find beneficial in the readings?
- What would you like to know more about?
- What are you currently doing in your classroom or building OR what would you like to be doing in your classroom or building that addresses digital citizenship and ethics?