

# Writing a Constitution for the Internet

In addition to the federal constitution, **every U.S. state and territory has its own constitution** that serves as its governing document. Massachusetts has the oldest state constitution (1780); Rhode Island is the newest (revised in 1986). Adopted by the people, a **constitution** is the supreme law that defines the rights of individuals and the powers of the government. You can read the [constitutions of every state and territory here](#).



Watch on YouTube <https://edtechbooks.org/-FGK>

The Internet has no constitution and the laws about its use and rights of people using it are still being debated and defined, country by country, state by state.

In these activities, you have the opportunity to create a constitution and bill of rights for the Internet.

## **Activity 1: Envision a Bill of Rights for the Internet**

- Explore the [many Bills of Rights in United States history](#).
- Then, **write a Bill of Rights for the Internet**.
  - Include articles regarding respect for privacy, personal data protection, freedom of speech, freedom of usage,

- and protection from harassment and false information.
- You can use the proposed [2010 Bill of Rights in Cyberspace](#) to guide your planning.
- Share your Internet Bill of Rights on social media and/or with family members to get feedback. Consider whether to make revisions based on the feedback you receive.

## Activity 2: Design a Constitution for the Internet

- Explore the [United States Constitution](#) and the [Constitution of your state](#).
- Then, come up with a list of fundamental rules and principles that all Internet users should have to abide by.
- **Write a Constitution for the Internet** that features at least 5 Articles (see example by [Joseph Shink](#)).
  - Remix language from the federal and state constitutions into your constitutional document.
  - You can also include your Bill of Rights in your document.
- Create a set of guidelines for how to amend your Constitution for the Internet.
- Share your Constitution for the Internet with classmates.
  - Bonus points: Propose an amendment for a classmate's Constitution for the Internet.

## Activity 3: Evaluate Whether the Internet Needs a Constitution

- Consider the following prompts:
  - Does the Internet need a Constitution? Why or why not?
  - Who should be responsible for ensuring that all Internet users abide by the Articles in the Constitution of the

Internet - Local governments? State governments?  
Countries? Businesses? Internet users?

- Should the Constitution be a living document (subject to change and interpretation) or is it rooted in its time/place (fixed rules rarely if ever changed)?
- **Create a TikTok or Snapchat video** to inform others about your thoughts regarding a Constitution for the Internet.

## Additional Resources

- [A Constitution for the Internet](#)
- [Connecting Human Rights and Internet Protocols](#) (Internet Society)
- [Interactive Constitution Media Library](#) (Interactive Constitution)
- [What can social media platforms do for human rights?](#) (Open Democracy)

## Connecting to the eBook

[\*Building Democracy for All: United States and Massachusetts Constitutions\*](#)

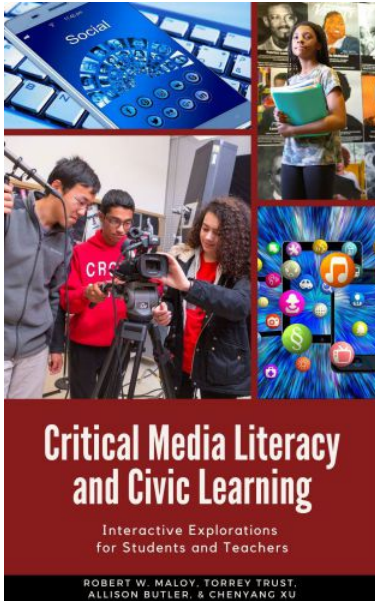
## Connecting to the Standards

- [Massachusetts Civics & Government Standards](#)
  - *Describe the provisions of the United States Constitution and the Massachusetts Constitution that define and distribute powers and authority of the federal and state government.* (Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and Social Studies) **[8.T6.2]**
- [ISTE Standards](#)
  - Digital Citizen
    - 2d: Students manage their personal data to

maintain digital privacy and security and are aware of data-collection technology used to track their navigation online.

- Knowledge Constructor
  - 3a: Students plan and employ effective research strategies to locate information and other resources for their intellectual or creative pursuits.
  - 3d: Students build knowledge by actively exploring real-world issues and problems, developing ideas and theories and pursuing answers and solutions.
- Creative Communicator
  - 6b: Students create original works or responsibly repurpose or remix digital resources into new creations.
  - 6d: Students publish or present content that customizes the message and medium for the intended audiences.
- [DLCS Standards](#)
  - Safety and Security (CAS.a)
  - Interpersonal and Societal Impact (CAS.c)
  - Collaboration and Communication (DTC.b)
  - Research (DTC.c)
- [English Language Arts > History/Social Studies Common Core Standards](#)
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.4
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.4
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.5
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.5

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7



Maloy, R. W., Trust, T., , & Xu, C. (2021). *Critical Media Literacy and Civic Learning*. EdTech Books.  
<https://edtechbooks.org/mediaandciviclearning>