Responsible Digital Citizenship: Safe and Respectful Online Community Life

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Abstracts

The world in the 21st century is in the digital technology era, where both society and technology are changing rapidly. A variety of technological tools and applications have taken part in creating a style or way of life for the new generation, often referred to as "Digital Citizens." They can undertake many activities anywhere over the Internet. However, as much as this has made things easier and faster, it also has detrimental effects. It is therefore important for everyone to be educated in digital citizenship. This study evaluates the concept of digital citizenship as the most influential concept in the 21st century. As nations engage in technological improvements, they need to ensure that students have the digital literacy and civic skills to use online learning possibilities effectively. This includes assisting students in assessing the source and authenticity of Internet materials, and practicing safe and ethical online conduct. In addition, schools may play a key role in teaching, enabling, and involving students in ICT best practices. Guiding children and young people safely, effectively, critically, and ethically in a world full of social media and digital technology is a responsibility for educators worldwide. The concept of digital citizenship has expanded to include several skills, features, and conduct that use the advantages and possibilities offered by the online environment, while creating resistance to any hazards. This study evaluates scholarly views on digital citizens, and provides a critique that will help students and teachers understand the proper, ethical, and professional behavior of digital citizens.

Keywords: Responsible Digital Citizenship; Safe and Respectful; Online Community Life; Technology

Introduction

Digital technology is becoming more prevalent, accessible, and portable, and more individuals are increasing their online and digital involvement. Unfortunately, understanding new possibilities, norms, and possible digital world problems does not instantly come with long-term usage (Isman & Gungoren, 2013: 551-556) Not everyone utilizing digital technology understands how to best manage the spectrum of tools available. Even experienced digital technology users may become victim to hackers, lose control of their online representation, or may otherwise not preserve their digital identity optimally.

Today's students are expected to master and use abilities that vary substantially from earlier generations. These abilities include communication and collaboration using various methods and platforms, acquiring digital literacy, critical thinking, and resolving complicated issues (Simsek & Simsek, 2013: 126-137) The wide range of online information and resources, along with the possibility of connecting immediately with peers and instructors, provides

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highly engaging and collaborative learning settings. In addition, students may follow their interests purely and rapidly, and locate educational materials and experiences online.

Although media and technology are very promising for learning, young people need guidance and instruction to make intelligent judgments in the digital world. According to the survey, "Technology support: concern, controversy, and balance," half of the adolescents and more than one-quarter of parents are glued to their mobile devices (Kim & Choi, 2018 : 155-171) In addition, the "Common Sense Census: Tweens and Young Media Use" indicated that over half of young people interfere with their education by multitasking with social media while completing their schoolwork (Palacin et al., 2021 : 149)

UNESCO's (2014 : 34) report entitled "Fostering Digital Citizenship through Safe and Responsible Use of ICT: A review of current status in Asia and the Pacific," analyzed the responses and policies of 12 countries across Asia and the Pacific regarding information technology, and communication. It was found that digital citizenship was often linked to national development, and most countries place the highest priority on digital citizenship in terms of safety, along with preventing potential risks. This reflects a concern for safety and needs to be addressed urgently. The second concern is responsibility in using technology. There is a call for balanced use to help users control themselves and have the flexibility to use information and communication technology for maximum benefit. In addition, the scope of digital citizenship needs to extend beyond the basic concepts of online security, together with guidelines for preparing youth to live and participate in a technology-rich society. The third and the fourth are value reinforcements and benefits of ICT use respectively (UNESCO, 2015 : 65)

Guiding children and young people safely, effectively, critically, and ethically in a world full of social media and digital technology is a responsibility for educators worldwide. The concept of digital citizenship has expanded to include several skills, features, and conduct that use the advantages and possibilities offered by the online environment while creating resistance to any hazards.

Essential Elements of Digital Citizenship Digital Access

Digital access refers to complete electronic social involvement (Isman & Canan Gungoren, 2014 : 73-77) IT offers a platform for linking students to a worldwide knowledge library, and, most crucially, with other learners, instructors, and individuals that may contribute considerably to their education and growth. Technology users need to be informed and assisted in the establishment of digital citizenship via electronic access. Digital isolation in an electronic society does not help the progress of users. Everyone, regardless of who they are, should have equal access to technology. There is also a need to deal with places or organizations with inadequate connections. We must commit to equitable digital access to become influential citizens. Schools should acquire technology, and children should be allowed to use the Internet when learning needs arise. Students should be advised on useful websites. Schools may organize workshops to facilitate and make Internet browsing efficient. Teachers and students should be taught to make maximum use of technology. Technical assistance should be sufficient to satisfy individual demands.

1. Digital Commerce

Technology users must comprehend that a substantial proportion of the market economy is electronically achieved. Legitimate and legal trading occurs, but the buyer or seller

must be aware of their obligations. Many people have realized that toys, clothing, automobiles, and food are often available on the Internet (Al-Zahrani, 2015 : 203-217) At the same time, there are a number of items and services that challenge the laws and morality of specific nations, such as illegal downloads, pornography, and gambling. In a new digital economy, users must learn how to be responsible participants. Spending considerable personal money on the Internet, students should be warned about online identity theft and fraud. They should also be knowledgeable and careful about the dangers and possibilities related to online purchases or transactions.

2. Digital Communication

In the last two decades, communications have changed dramatically. One of the digital revolution's critical developments is a person's capacity to communicate with others. Communication blossomed in the 21st century to provide a wide variety of alternatives. The growing digital communication choices have altered everything since individuals can constantly communicate with others. Now everyone has the chance to interact and cooperate with anybody from anywhere. Students can interact with people worldwide as easily as if they were next door (Isman & Gungoren, 2014 : 551-556) Unfortunately, many users were not educated on making proper judgments regarding the many digital communication alternatives. Teachers need to discuss the functions of today's communication technologies in our educational environment. Several debates are needed, including the learning environment, pedagogical techniques, students' safety, privacy, global accountability, management of identities, and information security — all for the sake of preparing pupils for their digital life. Students should be mentored in the development of their digital identity. The nature of privacy and public sharing should be discussed. Students should be aware of what they may post publicly, and what must remain private (i. e. personal data limitations, photographs, videos). Students should also be thoroughly aware of cyberbullying, and how to protect themselves from it.

3. Digital Literacy

Digital literacy is a technique of technology coaching, teaching, and learning. Although schools have progressed quite far in technology integration, more research is needed. A fresh emphasis must be placed on the technologies that should be taught, and how to utilize them. New technology is making its way into the workplace, without being employed in schools. Furthermore, employees in many different jobs require rapid information (just-in-time information). This procedure requires advanced search and processing expertise. Learners need to understand how to learn in a digital culture (Isman & Gungoren, 2014 : 73-77) Students should be taught to learn anytime and anywhere. As new technologies develop, students must understand how to make rapid and appropriate use of this technology. Digital citizenship entails training people in a new manner - they require a high level of knowledge literacy. Students should be taught in different ways. Workshops on polishing technical abilities should be held. Games, quizzes, and workshops should be held to promote students' digital literacy.

4. Digital Etiquette

Digital etiquette refers to accepted behavioral norms in digital contexts. Technology users typically consider this one of the most critical issues in digital citizenship. We understand incorrect behavior when we see it, but do not learn digital labels before using technology (Isman & Gungoren, 2014 : 73-77) As a result, restrictions and regulations are often implemented, or the technology is prohibited from improper usage. It is challenging to develop regulations and policies; teachers should train everyone to become responsible and

knowledgeable digital citizens in this new society. Discussions on digital etiquette should be organized. A teacher should direct pupils to digital etiquette in both casual and formal environments.

        5. Digital Law

        Digital law relates to legal, moral, and ethical obligations in the field of digital environments. Digital law addresses technological ethics within a society. Unethical usage is expressed as robbery and criminality. Ethical usage is shown in the form of compliance with rules. Users must recognize that stealing or damaging work, identity, or property online is a crime (Isman & Gungoren., 2014 : 73-77) There are specific social standards that consumers in an ethical society need to be aware of. These regulations apply to everyone working or playing online. It is unethical to hack data, illegally download music, create damaging viruses, or steal any property. In classrooms and organizations, digital law may directly affect pupils. Discussions and seminars should be organized to inform students about legal obligations, judgments, and ethics relating to the digital world. Pupils need to be trained and directed to use law-enforcing technologies.

        6. Digital Security

        Some people steal, harm, or disturb other people in society. The same can occur in a digital community. It is not sufficient to rely on the safety of other members of the community. Students require protection against viruses, data backups, and the surge management of equipment. As liable citizens, teachers need to secure information from external influences that can be disruptive or harmful. Digital security offers the required steps to ensure security and safety (Isman & Gungoren, 2014 : 73-77) This must be handled both in terms of learning for students, and safeguarding students, resources, and the organization. Students need to be oriented toward students' risk, improper access, inappropriate communication between students or teachers, and loss of data on servers.

        7. Digital Rights and Responsibilities

        Digital rights and responsibilities mean perception of freedoms, requirements, or agreements for everyone in the digital world. When a person creates or publishes anything in the online world, there must be a right to its protection, without any infringement of rights and both direct and indirect damages to others (Ribble, 2015 : 45-50)

        8. Digital Health and Wellness

        Digital health and wellness mean both physical and mental well-being in the digital world. Users of digital technology must have knowledge and understanding of such risks. As for physical well-being, injuries may arise from the use of digital technology devices, such as numbness in the hands from working with a computer for a long time, visual fatigue, and incorrect posture. Risks to mental well-being include Internet addiction, or stress caused by the intense use of digital technology (Ribble, 2015 : 45-50)

Significance to Education

        Today, technology is part of every childhood, and pupils have access to technology at an early age. Thus, it is vital to make further attempts to educate students about digital citizenship – often referred to as digital wellness or digital ethics – just as schools and parents concentrate on educating their children on how to be good citizens in the community (Xu et al., 2019 : 735-752) Furthermore, the Internet is full of cyberbullying, online crimes against children, child predators, and more. In this context, it is crucial for schools to integrate digital

citizenship into their curriculum (Palacin et al., 2021 : 149) Furthermore, digital citizenship is crucial in teaching pupils to live in a technological environment. It is particularly vital for schools to teach digital citizenship when students utilize gadgets and tablets in classrooms.

Digital citizenship focuses on the importance of education, highlighting that continual lifetime learning affects all situations, transversally and fluidly, where a programming system for digital citizenship takes place. Thus, the digital citizenship education approach regards education as the spark and the consequence of a citizen's journey. Digital citizenship in schools empowers children via education, allowing them to acquire skills, and be actively involved in a digital society. These are the skills and information essential for users to exercise and protect their democratic rights and responsibilities online, and promote and protect online human rights, democracy, and the rule of law (Isman & Gungoren, 2013 : 551-556) The introduction of relatively cheap technology makes the "digital gap" more likely to represent a gap in the abilities needed to utilize technology rather than access to technology per se.

Digital technology has enhanced education and training on physical university campuses in regularly scheduled education and teaching events, as well as less formal higher education centers. Although their growth as digital citizens – confident and competent individuals in the broader variety of digitally enhanced professional and social networks – may vary, students' digital abilities and know-how will grow during their academic career.
Digital citizenship education inspires young people to increase their online knowledge, commitment, and creativity, and learn about the legal impact of their online actions. Digital citizenship is a new component of citizenship education, focusing on educating students to work, live, and engage effectively in digital environments.

Digital citizenship is a person's behavior in using information technology and communication in the online world appropriately and effectively, by providing knowledge, skills, and abilities, as well as responsibility to oneself and society. It was found that most educators and organizations gave priority to the skills and abilities aspects of digital citizenship, followed by the moral and ethical aspects of digital citizenship and knowledge related to citizenship respectively (Wright, 2008 : 262-264; Ribble, 2015 : 45-50; Global digital Citizen Foundation,2015 : online ; UNESCO, 2015 : 65; Net Safe, 2018 : online)

Ribble's (2015) concept of digital citizenship is often put forward as the original concept towards the development of digital citizenship in the field of education. The is because it has many paradigms closely relevant to global citizenship, which focus on enhancing knowledge and the ability to cope with new opportunities and threats from the rapid changes of the 21st century. In addition, the instrument for assessing and evaluating digital citizenship is a 5-level rating scale questionnaire using the Likert Scale technique, which has been adapted differently, depending upon the purposes and the frameworks (e.g., Ribble, 2015 : 45-50; ISTE, 2015 : online; Al-Zahrani, 2015 : 203-217; Kim & Choi, 2018 : 155-171), of the research study on digital citizenship in Thailand.

Digital Citizenship in Thailand and Other Countries

A qualitative case study was conducted to examine providing high school students with technological experience to build a feeling of digital citizenship. Social media can be used to motivate students to learn about various cultures and nations, and compare their digital footprints. To uncover themes and trends, Snyder examined two exchanges using open coding. The case study results showed that students expanded their knowledge and made better efforts in online collaborative spaces to make responsible, ethical, and suitable decisions (Pardo &

Siemens, 2014 : 438-450) In addition, instructors vowed to continue implementing responsible and ethical usage methods in their education. However, the research results showed that if instructors had not participated in the research, integrating digital citizenship aspects into the program would not have been explored. Al-Zahrani (2015) has investigated students and teachers who work together to understand digital citizenship, and evaluated what teachers do to integrate technology professionally, and what children learn from teachers' activities (Al-Zahrani, 2015 : 203-217) Research conducted in the previous eight years of Al-Zahrani study has shown a trend in which the correct, liable, and ethical usage of technology among learners and instructors at all levels lacks understanding and expertise. This conclusion is consistent with the need for more research on digital citizenship competence. At the same time, it is necessary to focus on what instructors and students know, and less about what they do not know.

Meta-analyses of teachers' beliefs show that instructors have a significant effect on education. Moreover, their educational level is critical for the development of education quality (Xu et al., 2019 : 735-752) The ideas and foundations of the 21st century are more complicated than those in any preceding century. People need more ability to explore, assess, and consider problem solutions to succeed. Educators require curriculum design for teaching, and technology education to accommodate changing social and technological needs (Xu et al., 2019 : 735-752) Graduates require a variety of digital literacy abilities for employment, so instructors are obliged to ensure that students obtain the necessary qualifications during their official training.

Various research has shown that instructors have a good sense of technology usage in the classroom and feel that educational experience with mobile devices may be of substantial advantage. Teachers' approach to computer uses in their classrooms, and their choice to use technology in their activities are also linked to their degree of ICT comfort. A random participant survey was undertaken in 356 schools with 702 K–12 students to identify characteristics that affect the perception of digital technology efficacy (Lauricella, Herdzina, & Robb, 2020 : 158)

In summary, research studies on digital citizenship, conducted from 2016 until the present, have placed emphasis on school principals, teachers, university students, and students or youths. Their primary aim was to explore and create a policy framework for the development of educational administration. There were few studies on developing instructional models or learning management processes to promote digital citizenship. The studies conducted in many countries focused on providing an understanding of the context of digital citizenship, and the development of digital citizenship assessment and evaluation instruments. It could be said that there are many issues and gaps to be filled by further research.

Discussion

Pardo and Siemens (2014) found that ethics are connected to understanding acceptable and inappropriate online behavior by stakeholders in the firm. Several researchers have investigated unethical online behaviors. An empirical three-year investigation named the Good Play Project by Harvard Graduate School of Education monitored young online workers to establish their digital knowledge and ethics. The researchers uncovered five issues that indicated insufficient technology or ethical problems, including identity, property, authorship, credibility, and participation.

Identity is the knowledge of how individuals present themselves, and the information they supply in online situations. Shared data may be unduly divulged, or deceptive. Privacy issues are related to the personal data one supplies, or what individuals publish about others, including the publication or marking of photos of an unwanted or problematic individual. Credibility is founded on trust and confidence (Bouzguenda, Alalouch, & Fava, 2019 : 50) for example, reading assessments of venues or goods to judge the authenticity of online promotions. Researchers have highlighted the need for more research to understand how young people can be influenced to make ethical online choices, and what assistance they need to do so. Researchers propose that a curriculum be developed to teach young people to develop the abilities needed to make healthy online judgments. In addition, more studies are needed to determine practical objectives and activities.

Bouzguenda, Alalouch, and Fava (2019) qualitatively examined electronic conversations from a three-week online series of conversations with over 150 teachers, teenagers, and parents in partnership with Global Kids and common sense. The results revealed that adults are more inclined to assume ethical and moral responsibilities than adolescents. Adolescents indifferently engaged in illicit online activities, such as downloads and stealing others' intellectual property. This study indicates the crucial role adults, teachers, and parents play in molding children and teens into good digital citizens. The researchers recommended that individuals, particularly parents, address moral and ethical behavior with young people online through support groups and interference programs.

Poor online conduct, for example, cyberbullying or harassment, might be a way to improve personal popularity or seek affirmation by making others more vulnerable or weaker. If students are not taught how to effectively and responsibly engage online or in person, they cannot interact with others, especially with various religious ideas and systems, and will be unable to build an ethical or moral standard based on communication and tolerance. Unguided use of technology might lead to a flawed moral compass, and an increased risk of negative interactions among people (Kara, 2018 : 172-185) Professors and students may be trained to use various technologies, regardless of their level of education. However, this training must be based on responsible and ethical behavior, in order to prevent any unwanted, and possibly harmful long-term habits. Understanding what is acceptable and unwanted in using technology must be created both in the family and educational contexts. Therefore, when time is spent solving future problems of improper technological usage and emphasizing the proper use of technology, pupils are less likely to make erroneous judgments.

Studies have pointed out that focusing on the importance of exposure to education will make it possible for students to conduct themselves in digital technology responsibly and ethically. In addition, educators may demonstrate proper technological behavior to create and include digital citizenship in the curriculum (Pardo & Siemens, 2014 : 438-450) The formation of digital citizenship knowledge and concepts will therefore assist in defining the assistance required to ensure that instructors and students can benefit utmost from digital citizenship.

Conclusion

Digital citizens have become a focus for schools that consider integrating technology as a fundamental teaching and learning approach in educating their students for living and working in the 21st century. Education is founded on values, and education is offered in terms of values. The ethical, accountable, and safe use of digital technology cannot be educated if values are not continually and openly included in all educational endeavors. Only through

inculcating individual and social values in every child, teenager, and youth, is an ethically mature society feasible. This value training should be continued throughout every person's life cycle. Technologies should not be simply employed but they should be adequately utilized. The proper use of technology ensures sustainability, controlled consumption, respect for persons and their rights, the fulfillment of fundamental requirements (including education, communication, and social engagement), and the well-being of individuals and collectives. Any excessive, unsuitable, or dangerous use or management of technologies that could adversely impact individuals should be rejected.

Many countries have devoted much attention to promoting and developing digital citizenship by developing various projects, educational activities, and school curricula to educate people in digital citizenship. Educational institutions are aware that they need to create instruction that fosters students' quality digital citizenship skills and provides them with the opportunity to assess themselves and receive feedback. The results obtained from their self-assessment should be used to show different strengths and weaknesses of each individual student, thereby helping them to develop themselves further.

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