

The nine elements of digital citizenship*

1, Digital Access: As rapidly as internet access and technology have grown, socio-economic status and geographical location still play a part in keeping some from having digital access. It is important to remember that some still face these challenges and to help take steps to ensure that digital technologies continue to become more accessible.

2, Digital Commerce. Everything from groceries and toys to cars and electronics are available for purchase online. Consumers, including students, need to be informed and aware of the risks associated with online purchasing. Secure payments and sites that protect buyer information are important principles to teach.

3, Digital Communication. With email, text-messaging, video chat and more, communication is easier than ever before. With the push of a button or the click of a mouse, sensitive information can be shared unsafely. Warning students about what is appropriate to share through digital channels can prevent embarrassing, costly and dangerous situations.

4, Digital Literacy. Being an informed citizen is a large part of being a responsible citizen, not to mention that the more digitally literate students are, the better prepared they will be for the workplace or higher education. How to conduct online research, determine reliable sources, and use word processing software are all important skills.

5, Digital Etiquette. Just like it is imperative that students learn how to appropriately conduct themselves in the classroom, on the playground, and throughout the school, they need to learn how to be appropriate while online. More than just establishing policies about what is acceptable behaviour, students should be taught the importance of being respectful to their online peers and how to conduct themselves responsibly.

6, Digital Law. With new developments come new laws and restrictions. As technology has advanced, legislation has raced to keep up, resulting in ever-evolving rules and regulations. Teachers and students need to be informed and up-to-date about what is legal and acceptable.

7, Digital Rights and Responsibilities. Just as the citizens of many countries are afforded basic rights, those who participate in online activity are also given freedoms in their digital environment. Privacy rights and freedom of speech are often discussed and viewed as paramount.

8, Digital Health and Wellness. Out of the world's estimated seven billion people, six billion have access to mobile phones (Source: TIME Newsfeed). Statistics like this make it clear that many of us

spend hours a day looking at screens, typing on keyboards and talking on mobile phones. Safe ergonomic practices and eye safety are physical concerns that should be addressed.

9, Digital Security. We teach children to look before they cross the street, not to talk to strangers, and who to call in an emergency. Similar precautions are necessary within the digital community, including how to set robust passwords, virus protection, and how to determine site security.

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