

Digital Citizenship

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In recent years, many blue ribbon committees have called for changes in schools to prepare children for their futures. Globalization, competition, and new economies are dictating expectations to our schools. The proliferation of new technologies allows students to communicate and collaborate with their peers. While schools grapple with the implications of social networking, instant messaging, and cell phones, students need guidance from adults to use these power learning opportunities in appropriate ways. In some cases schools need to intervene because students use technologies inappropriately.

Many professional societies, including the American Association of School Librarians (AASL), the Consortium for School Networking (CoSN), and the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE), provide standards and goals for the implementation of technology in learning. These standards include information literacy, collaboration, communication, and digital citizenship, among others.

This article also focuses on digital citizenship. In addition to providing standards and behaviors, it provides a structure for addressing behaviors when they affect students and the school community.

Standards of digital citizenship:

1. Manage a positive screen reputation and your personal safety

Entries on social networking web sites, in microblogging networks, and in digital video collections are virtually permanent records of students' lives. A mistaken entry made as a teenage could negatively affect college acceptance, employment opportunities, or even future friendships. It is essential that students manage their traditional reputations as well as their screen reputations.

Having multiple identities on the Internet may be unwarranted and confusing. As students develop digital proficiencies, maturity and independence, their screen activities are likely to increase. Part of managing a screen reputation is with a single identity (screen name). This screen name can manage educational achievements and personal connections.

With a single screen identity, students should closely manage what they add to Internet sites as well as routinely checking search engines for their names to determine what is posted by others about them.

Meanwhile, students should manage their digital safety as strongly as they manage their safety each day. Post only information that will not reveal home addresses, telephone numbers, date of birth, parents' names, siblings' names, and other information that could make a student a target. This also means that students should never post provocative pictures of themselves, send such pictures through texting, or other means of sharing.

II. Protect the privacy of others

With digital technologies, students can easily share information and photos on social networking sites, phone texting, and peer-to-peer sharing. While this is possible, students should think whether it *should* be done. Like personal information, never share another individual's personal information without permission. With photos, it's best not to share them without permission of those in the group. Certainly, it is not appropriate to share a photograph of others that may be embarrassing or put them into a position to explain their actions to others. When unsure, ask for permission to share.

III. Value your relationships with others

Forwarding embarrassing photographs, text messages, or email communication damages relationships is easy with digital technologies. Resist the urge to share any information that might damage friendships or family relationships or hurt others. Common sense should tell students not to share anything about others without permission.

IV. Respect the ownership of intellectual property

Across the world, prosperity is gauged by ownership whether it be homes, office buildings, money, herds or animals, or publication of ideas. Attitudes and laws have been developed about ownership of ideas expressed through writing, art, and music. In learning environments, scholars give credit to other scholars through citations and attribution. When ideas are quoted directly or paraphrased, the original scholar is given credit. Additionally, scholars, artists, and musicians earn their incomes on selling their work. Respect that work by purchasing legal copies. Do not share your copy with others as it deprives the creator from payment.

V. Protect the technology you use at school and the library

Your community has provided you with many places to learn and for recreation. You have schools, libraries, and parks. Leave these places in better shape than you find them. At schools and libraries use the resources with great care. Computers, printers, and networks are expensive to install and maintain. Share your computer time with others who are waiting. Print only what you really need. Maintain your personal storage devices, such as usb drives, so they are virus free. Refrain from installing viruses or key loggers on computers. In many states, computer hacking and other digital intrusions are serious crimes.