Chapter 4
The Challenges of Digital Citizenship

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ABSTRACT

While the world wide web created opportunities for marginalized groups to have a real voice, it also created a venue for scammers, and for malicious, deliberate intent, such as hacking, criminal behavior, sexting, and cyberbullying. It becomes a question of how should we act when we are online, and what should be taught to the next generation of users? Parents often feel overwhelmed with the challenges and risks that digital culture presents to children. They want their children to take advantage of all technology has to offer; however, they also want them to stay safe and act responsibly. Parents can make sure their children are both safe and responsible by educating them about how to appropriately use technology. There is a need to openly discuss responsible use of technology. Digital citizenship is a concept providing guidelines for appropriate digital behavior. It can be an effective tool in addressing cyberbullying, sexting, security, and safety in the online environment.

In celebrating the 30th anniversary of the World Wide Web, Tim Berners-Lee (2019), the web's founder, recently stated:

But given how much the web has changed in the past 30 years, it would be defeatist and unimaginative to assume that the web as we know it can't be changed for the better in the next 30. If we give up on building a better web now, then the web will not have failed us. We will have failed the web.

While the World Wide Web created opportunities for marginalized groups to have a real voice, it also created a venue for scammers, and for malicious, deliberate intent, such as hacking, criminal behavior, sexting and cyberbullying. It becomes a question of how should we act when we are online, and what

should be taught to the next generation of users? Parents often feel overwhelmed with the challenges and risks that digital culture presents to children. They want their children to take advantage of all technology has to offer; however, they also want them to stay safe and act responsibly. Parents can make sure their children are both safe and responsible by educating them about how to appropriately use technology. There is a need to openly discuss responsible use of technology.

How then should we act when we are online, and what should be taught to the next generation of users? How can teachers and parents keep up with all the new and ever-changing technologies that a digital generation takes for granted? Parents often feel overwhelmed with the challenges and risks that digital culture presents to children. They want their children to take advantage of all technology has to offer; however, they also want them to stay safe and act responsibly. Parents can make sure their children are both safe and responsible by educating them about how to appropriately use technology. There is a need to talk about responsible use of technology.

One might indeed ask the user:

1. "Why are you online?
2. What is the reason to have a Twitter, Facebook or Snapchat account?"
3. "Is now the right time?"
4. "Where is your line between public and private?"

Turkle (2017) further notes that:

Drawn by the illusion of companionship without the demands of intimacy, we conduct **"risk free" a***ffairs on Second Life and confuse the scattershot postings on a Facebook wall with* **authentic communication***. Technology promises to let us* **do anything from anywhere with anyone***. But it also drains us as we try to do everything everywhere. … In a surprising twist,* **relentless connection leads to a new solitude***.*

Postman (1994) argues that the expansion of technology is eroding the distinction between childhood and adulthood. He terms this characteristic the "Frankenstein Syndrome.

One creates a machine for a particular and limited purpose. But once the machine is built, we discover – sometimes to our horror, … that it has ideas of its own." First, it requires no instruction to understand its form. Second, it does not make complex demands on either mind or behavior. Third, it does not segregate its audience.

How these digitally mediated practices can be managed remains highly contested but they are central to emerging notions of digital citizenship. This is a concept which can help teachers, students and parents understand what they should know in order to manage and use technology appropriately. Digital Citizenship is more than just a teaching tool; it is an effective method to address emerging issues in the online environment. Digital citizenship can be defined as the norms of appropriate, responsible behavior with respect to technology use. Being a good digital citizen means to demonstrate and practice safe, responsible, and legal use of technology. According to the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE), digital citizenship starts with the person not the tool. A good digital citizen is someone who understands the rights and responsibilities that come with being online and someone who uses technology in a positive way.

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