

Chapter 1

Digital Citizenship and Distance Education

Lesley S. J. Farmer

California State University – Long Beach, USA

ABSTRACT

This chapter describes the role of digital citizenship as it relates to school librarianship in online learning environments. It discusses the need for digital citizenship, its curriculum and standards, its place in school librarianship program preparation, distance education issues, learning resources, and implementation for the school community. Emerging issues are also noted.

INTRODUCTION

The world is changing faster than ever because of socio-economic factors which have been significantly impacted by technology. As the world seems to grow smaller due to enhanced communication and population mobility, a more interactive way of relating to information is seen. Economic and social activities rely on information and communication technologies. Therefore, the critical need for information is more important than ever. In a digital world where the amount of information is generally understood to double every two years, individuals need to evaluate resources carefully

and determine how to use relevant information to solve problems and make wise decisions. The issue is no longer getting information: it's getting the right information at the right time. Teaching about information and technology is not enough; learners must be instructed how to be responsible and ethical users of both the technologies they use, and the information they find. They need the ability to use technology safely, responsibly, critically, and productively. That is, become competent 'digital citizens'.

Librarians are well-positioned to provide this instruction both independently and collaboratively with the educational community. As resource managers, librarians know how to use information effectively and ethically. In particular, librarians in school settings know the school's various cur-

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-4666-3688-0.ch001

ricula so they can incorporate digital citizenship into learning activities. However, because digital citizenship is a recent concept, library students and school librarians often need training in order to implement this concept. This chapter, then, discusses digital citizenship (DC), its role in K12 education, and school librarian preparation focusing on distance education.

BACKGROUND

The Information Society

Digital citizenship instruction needs to be contextualized in terms of societal realities, the role of school librarians, and instruction. However, the information society impacts existing institutions and cultures. The speed and globalization of information leads to constant change, which can be hard to digest and manage. The majority of jobs now involve technology and other related new skills, so that the idea of a ‘terminal’ degree or a static skill set is outmoded. Rather, adults often need to ‘reinvent’ themselves throughout their working lives. Particularly for adults who are digital immigrants (Prensky, 2001), this new world of electronic information can be puzzling and overwhelming. Do they have enough background information to understand and use this form of information? Today’s learners, then, need to be literate in their access to, evaluation of, and use of information. They should be lifelong learners who pursue their interests. Also, it would be desirable if they were also socially responsible people who upheld democratic values, were ethical, and co-operated with one another. These skills, knowledge, and dispositions foster digital citizenship.

Technology Use

In 2010, 400 million people had Facebook accounts, 126 million blogs existed, 50 million tweets were created daily, and 91% of mobile web users accessed social networking sites. In addition, 44% of online videos viewed were done at the workplace (Kennedy, 2010).

What are people doing online? They are learning social rules, creating profiles, exploring identity, writing blogs, designing software, sharing or producing music, discussing interests, engaging in social and political activism, keeping friends, assessing risks. What else are they doing? Seeking validation, competing for popularity, venting, showing off, embarrassing themselves, damaging reputations, being vengeful, threatening, or harassing. They also may be perpetrators or victims of cons and abuse.

In short, we impact our digital reputation every time we go online, especially when doing social networking. Since the workplace typically monitors online activity, all of us need to be aware of our cyber-behavior. While protective actions such as filters and blocking can be used, we need education more than protection to cultivate digital awareness and the ability to maintain an online reputation.

Digital Citizenship

Two national sets of recent standards reinforce the need for DC. The International Society for Technology in Education’s education technology standards for students, released in 2007, as well as their 2008 standards for teachers address issues of technological responsibility. Students need to learn digital citizenship, and teachers should “promote and model digital citizenship and responsibility.” Similarly, *Standards for the 21st Century Learner* (American Association of School Librarians, 2007) asserts that “ethical behavior in the use of information must be taught” (p. 2). Several of the

13 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:
www.igi-global.com/chapter/digital-citizenship-and-distance-education/88873

Related Content

What If Your Library Can't Go Green?: Promoting Wellness in Libraries

Laura Bohuski (2020). *Handbook of Research on Emerging Trends and Technologies in Library and Information Science* (pp. 13-26).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/what-if-your-library-cant-go-green/241550

The Effect of Online Distance Education on LIS Programs: The Experience at North Carolina Central University

Robert M. Ballard and Yingqi Tang (2013). *Advancing Library Education: Technological Innovation and Instructional Design* (pp. 229-237).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/the-effect-of-online-distance-education-on-lis-programs/88900

The Master's in Library and Information Studies Program via Distance at the University of Wisconsin-Madison

Debra Shapiro (2013). *Advancing Library Education: Technological Innovation and Instructional Design* (pp. 222-228).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/the-masters-in-library-and-information-studies-program-via-distance-at-the-university-of-wisconsin-madison/88899

Introducing Discovery Systems to Academic User Communities: A Case Study with Recommendations

Mary Mintz (2012). *Planning and Implementing Resource Discovery Tools in Academic Libraries* (pp. 438-455).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/introducing-discovery-systems-academic-user/67835

Search Success at the University of Manitoba Libraries Pre- and Post-Summon Implementation

Lisa O'Hara, Pat Nicholls and Karen Keiller (2012). *Planning and Implementing Resource Discovery Tools in Academic Libraries* (pp. 268-287).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/search-success-university-manitoba-libraries/67825