Digital citizenship: Developing an ethical and responsible online culture

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Abstract
Responsible and ethical use of the Internet is not something that teenagers, in particular, consider to be important, and serious consequences are beginning to emerge as a result of careless and offensive online behaviour. Teachers and teacher-librarians have a duty of care to make students aware of the potentially devastating effects of thoughtless, inappropriate or malicious online behaviour, and to guide them into making wise choices when interacting in a digital world.

Introduction
While the rapidly evolving world of the Internet has revolutionised our lives in incredibly exciting ways, it has also opened the door to a whole new set of social problems, the speed of this has caught law enforcement agencies and the public, as a whole, by surprise. As a result, parents, schools and the police seem to be forever playing catch-up, with 20th century solutions often applied to 21st century problems. In the past, people were limited in their sphere of influence to those with whom they could physically come in contact. Now, with the emergence of interactive, collaborative Web 2.0 communication technologies, we each have the world at our fingertips – literally – and we each must internalise how to behave in this rapidly evolving world: in essence, how to become digital citizens.

Almost every day the media highlight more examples of the misuse of social networking sites, internet scams or cyber bullying. Along with illegal downloads, credit card fraud, game addictions, viruses, hate sites, pornography and predator grooming, these are referred to by some as ‘digital disease’ (http://www.sextingissstupid.com/stop-sexting.html). Just as we educate the public about physical diseases in our society, so we must educate our population, especially naïve and vulnerable children, about the dangers related to inappropriate and unethical use of the Internet.

Vicki Davis and Julie Lindsay are two very active players in the digital citizenship arena, and they state: “It is not enough to open the gate and let the sheep out to wander aimlessly…. Unsafe drivers cause accidents, whereas educated drivers make the roads safer. Likewise, educating students makes the Internet a safer place” (Lindsay & David, 2010). It is not enough to have a set of rules for children to follow at home or at school, because there are plenty of other ways that they can access the Internet – especially now that laptop programs are being implemented in schools and many children have Internet access via their mobile phones. Instead, they need to understand the reasons for the rules and be able to make thoughtful and critical decisions when confronted by opportunities to engage in inappropriate and irresponsible online behaviour.

What is digital citizenship?
According to Mike Ribble, a pioneer and passionate advocate who has written extensively about the subject, digital citizenship can be defined as “the norms of appropriate, responsible behaviour with regard to technology use” (http://www.digitalcitizenship.net/Nine_Elements.html). He has analysed the types of behaviour which comprise digital citizenship, and categorised these into 9 elements:

1. Digital Etiquette: electronic standards of conduct or procedure.
3. Digital Literacy: process of teaching and learning about technology and the use of technology.
8. Digital Health & Wellness:  *physical and psychological well-being in a digital technology world.*

See the Brisbane Grammar School Libguide at http://libguides.brisbanegrammar.com/watchfulwaryandwise which contains resources on most of these areas.

**Why is developing a digital citizenship program critical?**

Three of the biggest problems facing young people today are:

- their perceived anonymity
- their accumulated digital portfolio or digital footprint
- the legal implications of thoughtless or malicious actions

**Perceived Anonymity**

What students often forget, or don’t care about, is that their comments and images can be viewable by hundreds or thousands of others. As an example, the Library of Congress has acquired the archive of all Tweets since the introduction of Twitter in 2006, a snapshot of our society for future reference (Digital Trends). This means that any comment that anyone has posted on Twitter since its inception, is now permanently recorded forever. The Wayback Machine is an archive database of websites the way they were at a certain time in history, and it’s possible to go back and check various websites.

Similarly, Facebook would have an archive of everything posted on its site, and for legal purposes these would also be searchable. It would not be uncommon for many teenagers to have 600 friends on their Facebook account, and the implications for who can see posted information/photos/groups joined is enormous. Students must learn to tighten their privacy settings, and there are numerous websites and blog posts on the Internet showing how to do this. Two examples by Mahendra Palsule are: 10 solid tips to safeguard your Facebook privacy, and 8 steps to regain control of your Facebook privacy

The following National Teen Internet survey was funded by Cox Communications in partnership with NCMEC and John Walsh and was conducted in March 2007 among 1,070 teens age 13 to 17. The research was conducted online by TRU.

- A majority of teens (58%) don’t think posting photos or other personal info on social networking sites is unsafe
- About half (49%) are unconcerned posting personal info online might negatively affect their future
- Teens readily post personal info online. 64% post photos or videos of themselves, while more than half (58%) post info about where they live. Females are far more likely than male teens to post personal photos or videos of themselves (70% vs. 58%)
- Nearly 1 in 10 teens (8%) has posted his or her cell phone number online
- 49% of high school students have posted personal information on their Web pages — such as name, age, or address — that could assist a stranger (from http://www.safesurfer.org/websafe.html)

For teenagers, these 2 Youtube video clips *Think before you post* and *Once you post it you lose it* are graphic reminders about the potentially devastating consequences of students casually posting online. There is also an excellent poster available as a PDF download from www.cybertipline.com which makes students stop and think who is viewing their information.

Younger children often innocently post personal information online that can lead to cyber grooming, then don’t recognise it and often don’t know how to deal with it. A street name and number can easily be found using Google Maps street view and Google Earth. Watch the Youtube video *Exposing private information online* on exposing private information online to see how easy it is to track children down.
Digital Dossier / Digital Footprint

The Youtube video Digital Dossier is quite thought-provoking in that it gives an overview of how much information is accumulated about each of us over a lifetime, whether we created it or not, and whether we like it or not. A potential problem that young people do not often consider is the fact that most employers now check potential candidates on Google before they offer interviews.

It is quite easy to search private information on the Internet on almost everyone…there are hundreds people search or background check websites on the Internet. You can make a background check on a lost friend, a missing relative, a potential date, a new neighbour, a prank caller, a ruthless car driver, an unknown mobile number, an unlisted phone number, your boss, your co-worker, or strangers you never meet.

On the flip side, not only you can find anything about others, people can also find anything about you - which includes your personal records and private information. Creditors, banks, political parties use your personal data for legitimate purpose. However, unscrupulous individuals and criminals can use the same information to harm you and your family. With the full availability of your personal information, your identity can be stolen or exploited in illegal activities such as identity theft, predatory marketing, credit fraud and Internet stalking.

http://www.squidoo.com/personalInformation

The website 25 free search engines to find anyone shows how easy it is to track down people you are interested in finding. While JessicaM at squidoo.com/personalInformation gives a very comprehensive overview of how to remove personal information from Google and the Internet, the reality is, while many older people do not want their information made public, it seems that most of the younger generations just don’t care.

A report published by the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) and the University of New Hampshire revealed that of a sample of children & teens who use the Internet:

- 1 in 5 children - solicited for sex in the past year
- 1 in 33 children - aggressively solicited sexually, meaning that the child was threatened, asked to meet, called on the phone, or received mail or gifts
- 1 in 4 children - exposed to photos of people having sex, even though about 1/3 of households reported using "Internet blocking software"
- 1 in 17 children - threatened or harassed on the Internet, including threats of harm to the child, friends or other family members
- 95% of parents didn't recognize the lingo kids use to let people know that their parents are watching
- 89% of sexual solicitations are made in either chat rooms or Instant Messages
- 20% of children age 10-17 have received unwanted sexual solicitations online; that's one out of every five kids
- 75% of youth who received an online sexual solicitation did not tell a parent
- 81% of parents of online youth say that kids aren't careful enough when giving out information about themselves online
- 76% of parents don't have rules about what their kids can do on the computer
- 65% of parents believe that kids do things online that they wouldn't want their parents to know about
- 4,000,000 children are posting content to the Web every day
- 15,000,000 youth use Instant Messaging

Legal Implications

We need to reinforce the fact that once students post something it’s out of their control, and it’s out there forever. Freedom of speech does not equate to freedom from consequences, and there are now many examples of young adults being sued or prosecuted because of careless or deliberate Internet postings.
One of the most famous examples of cyber bullying and a video being out of control is that of The Star Wars Kid. In 2002 Ghyslain Raza filmed himself, at his school in Quebec, mimicking Darth Maul from Star Wars. Unfortunately his friends found the video and uploaded it to the Internet, where it went viral. It is estimated that it has been watched more than a billion times, and has been re-worked into other videos hundreds of times. Ghyslain endured terrible bullying and severe depression after the video was posted, and his parents sued the boys who had posted it for $250,000. Today he has managed to move on, and is now a lawyer.

In the US Megan Meier was a depressed 13 year old, who hanged herself after a MySpace relationship with a boy turned sour. The problem was, the boy was the mother of one of Megan’s friends down the street, and she deliberately set out to make Megan pay for upsetting her daughter. At the time no legislation existed to charge Lori Drew for committing a crime, however the prosecutors had hoped for a 20 year jail term.

In the UK, “a teenager who posted death threats on Facebook has become the first person in Britain to be jailed for bullying on a social networking site. Keeley Houghton, 18, of Malvern, Worcestershire, has been sentenced to three months in a young offenders' institution after she posted a message saying that she would kill Emily Moore.”

18 year old Philip Alpert from Orlando had just had an argument with his 16 year old ex-girlfriend when he sent a naked photo of her to dozens of her family and friends. He was arrested on child pornography charges, given a 5 year probation and registered as a sex offender until he turns 43. “He's been kicked out of college, he cannot travel out of the county without making prior arrangements with his probation officer, he has lost many friends and is having trouble finding a job because of his status as a convicted felon. At the same time, Alpert says, "I'm being punished for the rest of my life for something that took two minutes or less to do." http://edition.cnn.com/2009/CRIME/04/07/sexting.busts/

How do we teach digital citizenship?
There are hundreds of sites now set up to deal with this ever-growing problem, and here a just a few where you can participate or download free activities to use with your students:

Alannah and Madeline Foundation
In Australia, “the National Pilot to increase Cyber-Safety in Schools is being conducted by the Alannah and Madeline Foundation (AMF). It involves 164 government and non-government schools in urban, rural and remote regions. It will help confront safety issues in e-communications, including cyber-bullying, and examine the effectiveness of existing cyber-safety programs in schools.

Schools will be provided with web resources to help them create an approach to cyber-safety that meets their specific needs. The project will also help clarify the role that schools play in ensuring responsible and safe use of technology.

The pilot aims to:

- Make cyber-safety an integral part of student wellbeing practices in schools;
- Improve the curriculum in relation to cyber-safety;
- Increase the skill and confidence of teachers to confront cyber-safety issues; and
- Help schools work with parents and the community to keep children safe.”

Digital Citizenship and the Digital Compass Activity

According to Mike Ribble, “If teachers are going to teach students about the potential dangers of misusing and abusing technology, in the 21st century, a digital citizenship compass becomes a handy tool. Learning digital citizenship is rooted in discussion and dialogue and not in acceptable use policies (AUPs) that are simply lists of dos and don'ts.

None of the scenarios has easy answers. Students will not always agree on what is right and wrong because they have not learned the tenets of digital citizenship. Students often argue that there are shades of gray when interpreting each scenario. The purpose of the compass metaphor activity is to help students analyse the concept of technology use and misuse…. The best way to help others to understand the right direction is through discussion, self-reflection, and role modelling.”

Points of the Digital Compass:

• Wrong
• As Long As I Don't Get Caught
• Depends on the Situation
• I Am Not Sure It's Wrong
• Right
• I Don't Know
• It's an Individual Choice
• What's the Big Deal?
• Wrong

Directions. Give each student a copy of the 21st century digital compass image. (Editor's note: A version of the image is available as an online supplement to this article at http://www.iste.org/ll/. The author authorises non-commercial use and duplication of this image.) Read the following scenarios. Instruct students to point to the direction that matches their opinion. After everyone makes a choice, allow students to analyse their answers.

Scenario 1. A student sends a harassing e-mail to another student. The receiving student retaliates with a "flaming e-mail." Is sending harassing and flaming e-mail messages wrong?

Scenario 2. When hanging out with friends, one of the students gets a cell phone call and conducts a loud conversation in a public place. Is talking in a loud voice on a mobile phone in a public place right?

Scenario 3. A student logs on to a file sharing Web site and downloads the newest song. Is downloading music from the Internet wrong?

Scenario 4. A student has a file on a disk that has been infected with a virus and uses it with school computers. Is it right to use files without checking for a virus?

Scenario 5. An hour before class, a student remembers that writing assignment is due. The student goes to the library, logs on to a Web site, and copies/pastes information without giving credit to the authors. Is using Internet materials without giving credit to the authors wrong?

Scenario 6. At home, a student uses a software package to copy movies from DVDs for his or her friends. Is copying copyrighted materials right?

Scenario 7. Two students use text messaging on their cellular phones to pass information between them during class. Is it wrong to send text messages during class?
Scenario 8. A team of students create a Web site for a teacher at school, but the site cannot be read by students with special needs. Is it right to create Web sites that are not accessible to students with disabilities?

Scenario 9. During a regular class session, students use their handheld computers to beam information back and forth. Is it wrong to beam during class?

Scenario 10. Students obtain a copy of the final exam from the teacher’s computer by hacking the password. Is hacking into the teacher’s computer wrong? (Ribble & Bailey, 2005)

Adina’s Deck
This is a DVD series of digital citizenship scenarios, designed to make middle school aged students think more carefully about online issues. Purchase them from http://adinasdeck.com/shop/. (Libraries can purchase 3 DVDs, 3 guides and licences for $54.99 USD)
Episode 1: Solving cyber bullying mysteries
Episode 2: The case of the online crush (online predator)
Episode 3: The case of the plagiarised paper

Hector’s World
Hector’s World is a free online space for 2-9 year olds and their parents and teachers. “Hector’s World® has gone into hyperspace with the development of the magical, animated community of Silicon Deep. Here, Hector and his friends learn about ICT (information and communication technology) and how to become confident and responsible digital citizens.”

Using the internet to create a positive digital footprint
While the majority of media reports that we hear highlight the negative use of the Internet and social networking sites, it is very refreshing to know that there are also many young people who are using the internet to change the world for good.

• One of the nicest stories is that of Ryan Hreljac. “In 1998, when Ryan was in Grade 1, he learned from his teacher, Mrs. Prest that people were dying because they didn’t have clean water to drink. He decided that raising money for those without access to this basic need was the right thing to do. He worked for four months doing extra chores around his house to earn his first $70. Ryan was just seven years old when his first well was built in 1999 at a school in a Ugandan village. The well continues to serve thousands of people.” The Ryan’s Well Foundation now involves over 650 schools from 30 countries in fundraising activities, and they have completed over 560 water and sanitation projects and provided access to clean water, improved sanitation and hygiene education for over 670,000 people. The Ryan’s Well Foundation website can be found at: http://www.ryanswell.ca/about-us.aspx

• At the age of 17, with a passion for social issues, Yassmin Abdel-Magied founded Youth Without Borders, an advocacy group that strives to empower youth to work together to implement positive change within their communities in Australia and overseas. Yassmin’s webpage is at http://www.youthwithoutborders.com.au/node/6

• 25 Days to Make a Difference was a blog set up by Laura Stockman in honour of her grandfather: “Albert Stockman was my grandpa. He loved helping other people, and he believed that everybody could make the world a better place, not just by doing big things, but by doing small things too! My grandpa once told me that I was a leader. Even though he called me “Lit-tle Laura”, he made me feel big and strong inside. In 2005, my grandpa got very sick. He was only in his sixties, and he was very healthy and happy before then. I was sad and scared when he was diagnosed with brain cancer. He died only five months later. I was very, very sad when he died, and I felt lonely. My grandpa would not have wanted this though.
In December of 2007, I decided that the best way to remember my grandpa during the holiday season would be by living my life like he did, by making a difference and being a leader. I decided to honor my grandfather’s memory by trying to make a difference every day for twenty five days. I wanted to be able to do little things, like kids my age typically do, instead of HUGE things that are sometimes hard for kids like me. I decided to write about my adventures here, and I also created a challenge.

I challenged everyone who read my blog to TRY to do something every single day during the holiday season to make a SMALL difference in his or her world. I explained that whoever made the “most difference” in December would win a $25.00 donation to the charity of his or her choice on Christmas night. I SAVED ALL OF MY ALLOWANCE ($25) FOR THE MONTH OF DECEMBER, AND I WAS REALLY SURPRISED AND EXCITED WHEN SEVERAL PEOPLE GENEROUSLY OFFERED TO MATCH MY DONATION (OR MORE)!

http://twentyfivedays.wordpress.com/

Working Together to Make a Difference http://workingtogether2makeadifference.ning.com/ is a website set up by Jenny Luca in response to Laura’s blog.

- When 21-year-old Chris Raine decided to spend a year without alcohol and blog about it, he didn’t realise how many young people he would influence in the future. His blog, Hello Sunday Morning, is “a space for any individual who is willing to go an extended period without alcohol to achieve [their] personal life goals and, ultimately, develop a healthy relationship with alcohol. HSM reaches over 9000 people and has over 75 bloggers from across the world, proving that you can have a fun, happy and full life - with or without alcohol.” http://hellosundaymorning.com.au/category/chris/ To read about why he decided to create this blog, go to http://hellosundaymorning.wordpress.com/chris-raine-hello-sunday-morning/

Conclusion
As well as physical danger from inappropriate use of the Internet, children also face emotional and psychological trauma, and legal ramifications. For these reasons it is essential that we act sooner, rather than later.

Three key learnings:

- Irresponsible and potentially harmful use of the Internet is escalating alarmingly
- Most children and teenagers need to be taught ethical and responsible ways to behave when using the Internet, particularly as information online is out there forever.
- Young people should be encouraged to create a positive digital profile and to use the Internet for good and worthwhile projects.

References

Websites

General


http://www.stopcyberbullying.org/index2.html Stop Cyberbullying


http://healthsciencesotechnology.wikispaces.com/ Digital+Citizenship HSTE Project


http://www.findermind.com/free-people-search-engines/ 25 free people search engines to find anyone

http://www.slideshare.net/madrattling/improving-your-digital-footprint Slideshare – Improving your digital footprint

http://www.slideshare.net/shareski/your-digital-footprint Your digital footprint

http://www.safeteens.com Internet safety for teens - includes story of Philip Albert & sexting

http://www.sextingissstupid.com/stop-sexting.html Are you practicing responsibility 21C

http://www.cyberbully.org/documents/documents/targetedYRO.pdf Targeted youth risk online prevention and intervention

http://www.cyberbully.org/documents/cybersavvyschools.pdf Cybersavvy schools

http://www.squidoo.com/personalInformation How to remove your personal information from Google and the Internet

http://tcs.cybertipline.com/videos.htm Posters, radio and television ads – Cybertipline

http://www.isafe.org/ iSafe – the leader in eSafety education

http://www.safekids.com/how-to-recognize-grooming-2/ How to recognise grooming


**YouTube Videos**

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4w4_Hrwh2XI&feature=related Think before you post

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Enph-DJ7wv0&feature=related What you post can haunt you forever

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n2Z48UcTdQo&feature=related Internet safety video – Online grooming

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CE2Ru-jqyrY&NR=1 Once you post it you lose it – Think before you post

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P-n8J3WDq5Q&feature=related  Online grooming – teenage boys
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SGYxcdz8jWw&feature=related  Think you know? Stay safe
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4VCTN26umVA&feature=related  Claire thought she knew
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UA1XEgzQeZo  Exposing private information online
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HPj6viIBmU  The Star Wars kid
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GpdRmLIIvuc  Facebook and your boss
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ddZWkhItPuI  MySpace Facebook: Employers are watching
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=79IYZVYIVLA  Andy’s digital dossier
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UA1XEgzQeZo  Exposing private information online
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=byN7Jm1Mlic  Adina’s Deck Episode 1 trailer
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mvVQRWS5X-E  Adina’s Deck Episode 2 trailer
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rN1depo8zE  Adina’s Deck Episode 3 trailer
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6MxxqcH_Mkc&feature=related  The Megan Meier story - from her parents’ point of view
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FKXlEzR5rYw  MySpace suicide trial starts – Lori Drew trial
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LabbwqZ4MGA  MTV – Should sexting be a sex offence? (Philip Alpert now a sex offender)
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cNwm4YH9xYg&feature=related  Dangers of teen sexting
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0mEky0KdHPk&feature=related  ‘Sexting’ teenagers risk child-porn charges
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fg6oGhBYWEo&feature=related  Sexting: Flirting with Felony

*Positive Digital Footprint*
http://twentyfivedays.wordpress.com/  25 days to make a difference
http://hellosundaymorning.wordpress.com/chris-raine-hello-sunday-morning/  About Chris Raine
http://www.ryanswell.ca/about-us.aspx  Ryan’s well
http://workingtogether2makeadifference.ning.com/  Working together to make a difference

*Practical Activities*
http://www.cybersmart.gov.au/ Cybersmart website Aust Govt Information for children, teens, libraries and schools, with lesson plans for the classroom and materials that parents can discuss with their children.


http://adinasdeck.com/ DVDs about a group of teenagers and digital citizenship issues

http://www.onguardonline.gov/ topics, games and videos about online safety

http://www.teachingcopyright.org/ Curriculum resources for teaching copyright (American)

http://www.stopcyberbullying.org 8 forms of cyber Bullying & quiz questions for “Have you ever…”

http://www.onguardonline.gov/games/auction-action.aspx Auction auction game

http://websites.kahoks.org/safeweb/ Unit 10 Internet safety – links to curriculum resources

http://websites.kahoks.org/Renfro/Internet_Safety_Calendar-2009.htm April is internet safety month – activities for K-4


http://www.chatdanger.com/ Chat Danger - includes real stories and example

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**Articles in journals**
