

## SECTION

# Understanding Digital Citizenship

*It is a thousand times better to have common sense without education than to have education without common sense.*

—ROBERT G. INGERSOLL



What is digital citizenship and why is it important for individuals to become contributing members of a digital society? Moreover, why should anyone—administrators, teachers, parents, students—even be concerned with such a thing as a “digital society?”

The term *citizen* is most commonly defined as “a native or naturalized person who owes allegiance to a larger state or collective and who shares in the rights and responsibilities afforded all members of that collective.” As the definition states, a citizen both works for and benefits from a larger society. The concept of digital citizenship, then, reinforces the positive aspects of technology so that everyone can work and play in this digital world.

To date, few social guidelines have been developed for the use of digital technologies. We can decide, as a society, that unacceptable behavior should be the norm. Or we can decide that digital technology should be used for the benefit of all. This is why those who work for and benefit from a larger society need to be involved in deciding how best to support digital technology in our communities. This is why there needs to be digital citizenship.





# 1

## A Brief History of Digital Citizenship

The idea of technology raising ethical considerations did not start with computers. With every new technology that has been discovered, the way in which it is used and to what end has defined that tool. Prior to computers, the most recent major tool to change society and education specifically was the printing press. What the printing press allowed in the way of sharing ideas with the “masses” forever changed how we look at learning and the educational field. Some people consider the printing press as the beginning of more structured educational systems and the division of adults and children (this is described in *The Disappearance of Childhood* (1994) by Neil Postman.

The growth of technology in the 1950s and 1960s, when telephones and televisions came into many homes, continued this trend of sharing information across vast areas in a short amount of time. Marshall McLuhan, in his 1964 classic *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, proposed that, “a medium itself, not the content it carries, should be the focus of study.” He said that “a medium affects the society in which it plays a role not only by the content delivered over the medium, but also by the characteristics of the medium itself.” (McLuhan, 1964)

His ideas seem even more appropriate to today's technology than they did when he wrote them in 1964. McLuhan also identified technology as one's self (as we see more and more today with people on their devices) and as leading to the inevitable loss of other skills (which he identified as amputations), such as being able to write a letter on paper.

The growth of technology throughout the 1980s and 1990s, along with the expansion of the internet, brought new opportunities as well as challenges. During the 1990s, technology users recognized that there needed to be structure to what was considered appropriate and inappropriate use of technology. The interest in computer ethics grew rapidly during the 1990s. Moor (1985) defined computer ethics as “the analysis of the nature and social impact of computer technology and the corresponding formulation and justification of policies for the ethical use of such technology” (p. 7). Educators who supported the need for computer ethics believed there was a continuous cycle of inappropriate behavior that was happening with technology. These educators believed that if abuse of technology continued without consequences, technology abuse would lead to loss of technology freedom for all users. The 1990s began to prepare users for the changes that were on the horizon of digital technology use. Concern for appropriate technology use would lead to future interest in how students used technology.

The early years of the 2000s brought an increase in mobile computing. Prior to the year 2000, mobile computing was in its infancy, but was often too expensive for the majority of users to own. By the year 2000, cellular phones and other mobile technologies became less expensive and more readily available for widespread commercial use. The problem with mobile computing technologies was that they were purchased without understanding the social implications of owning and using these devices. Once again, schools were unprepared for the numbers of students who were coming to their schools with cellular phones (and other mobile computing devices). Prior to events such as the Columbine, Colorado school shooting and the terrorist attacks of 2001, schools banned electronic devices in schools, but these events triggered parental demand for having immediate contact with their children. Users were not required to become literate about the technology and when and where it should be used. This practice continues to the current writing of this edition.

The early 2000s did not just bring rise to the cellular phone but to other mobile technologies as well. Devices such as personal data assistants (PDAs), laptops, and digital audio players grew rapidly in popularity. Schools began exploring the potential uses for these mobile technologies. The ability to share information “wirelessly” was of interest to school technology directors. But students found other potential uses for this wireless communication. Some of the information was simply student conversations; some was benign, but some interfered or created issues within the school. Once again, schools considered banning students from using the technology in schools, but parents and outside pressures (e.g., the American Civil Liberties Union) forced schools to reevaluate how they were handling the inappropriate use of technologies in schools (Parry, 2005). School administrators needed to find a way to educate teachers, students, and parents about the increasing issues of technology misuse.

During the 2000s, concerns about inappropriate technology use became apparent. Pressures created in previous years, as well as the new issues associated with mobile computing, made it clear that schools and districts needed to do be more proactive. Schools decided to implement acceptable use policies (AUPs) in an attempt to decrease inappropriate technology use. The AUP stated that the student and parent read and understood the rules for technology use in the school. Often students and parents signed the AUP without a full understanding of what was considered appropriate and not when using technology. In some situations, students would violate the AUP and schools realized that they had little legal recourse for the students' actions. As schools saw that these policies were not effective in changing student behavior, those in education began to revisit the concept of computer ethics from the 1990s. Organizations such as the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) created their own set of standards, the National Education Technology Standards (NETS) for teachers, students, and administrators. These standards included a section on technology ethics to provide a framework of what teachers, students and administrators should know. Since that time ISTE has updated these standards. As an outgrowth of the original technology ethics standards, ISTE's most recent student, teacher, coach, and administrator standards all have digital citizenship as one of their strands.

Digital citizenship is not a new concept in the field of digital technologies. The term has been used to define different programs: Drake University created a program on digital citizenship dealing with service learning and the digital divide (Shulman, S., Beisser, S., Larson, T. & Shelley, M., 2002). However, this and similar programs have failed to provide students and educators with the comprehensive technical knowledge needed to act appropriately in a digital society.

Cyberbullying was another phenomenon emerging from increased access to technology and mobile computing (Kearsley, 2005). Franek (2004) defined a cyberbully as "anyone who repeatedly misuses technology to harass, intimidate, or terrorize another person." Kearsley (2005), Pappas (2005), and Simmons (2003) agreed that because many users can access technology, the impact on students was worse than being bullied by traditional methods. Another aspect of cyberbullying was the issue of responsibility. If the attacks did not happen while using school technology, the schools were often less able to help the student being bullied. This issue continues to be a point of discussion in schools, and will be more deeply addressed throughout the text. One example of how this topic has crossed over into mainstream media is the novel *TTYL* by Lauren Myracle (2004), which caused concerns for those in the literary world. Written in the style of an instant messaging conversation, the book begins the discussion of what could be seen as a reflection of parents' inability to grasp what their children are doing on devices.

As schools and districts have begun 1:1 device initiatives (introducing one computer/tablet per student) the issues with ethical technology use have increased. Without a plan to help educate the staff and students on what is appropriate when using technology tools in the classroom, the problems will continue and increase. For those who have set a direction, such as digital citizenship, issues have stopped being a limiting factor in the classroom. The use

of technology changes education, and educators need to be prepared for making adjustments. Teacher preparation programs and professional development around the globe have begun to look more closely at what digital citizenship is, and where it fits within education.

## Character Education and Digital Citizenship

Society has changed. In the past it was the norm for families to join together around a dinner table and talk about the events of the day. People read newspapers and watched or listened to news broadcasts from professional journalists. These journalists gathered information from trusted sources, then shared the information with the masses. Today many of these trusted sources of information are gone. Now it is the responsibility of the individual to determine what information is correct. Now families who want to learn what members of the household are doing check status updates, posts, or send texts. As reflected upon by Dr. Jason Ohler, the days of the dining room discussion has gone away and now dining rooms have been changed to “gathering spaces” (Ohler, 2014).

Technology has changed the dynamics of families, schools, and communities. Introducing technology to children, often at a very young age, does provide opportunities that their parents did not have. Often technology can allow for creativity on a scale that was unknown in the past. It allows users to produce information instead of being just consumers of it. With the benefits that technology provides, it also can have pitfalls; loss of personal interaction, bullying by others through digital tools; oversharing information to others not known to us. These are just a few examples, but there are other issues that can come along as well. How can we balance the positive aspects of technology, protect from the potential issues, and teach the values that are needed in a society inundated with these tools?

With the growth in the use of technology in education, there is a need for programs that help students to focus on the positive uses of technology and be much more discerning in their decisions of what to post, comment, or discuss when using digital technologies. Most people will do what is right, if they know what the right thing is. To help define these ideas for everyone, a program is needed to help everyone identify the appropriate thing to do when online. These are the reasons that character education has become a much-discussed topic with the expansion of technology in schools.

One such program, CHARACTER COUNTS!, comes from the Josephson Institute of Ethics ([josephsoninstitute.org](http://josephsoninstitute.org)). Dr. Josephson came up with the six pillars of CHARACTER COUNTS!: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship are the basis for anyone wanting to work, play, and live together in any society. These pillars are intertwined with the ideals built into digital citizenship. Both are attempting to reach the same goal: to have people understand and work with one another in a world of mutual esteem. Some may be confused by the idea of “digital” topics and those in the “real” world. Today those two domains have intersected with one another; it is difficult to find where one ends and the other begins. Many educators believe that the word digital should and must

be removed from citizenship. The hope is that how we act in the real world should be the same as in the online world, and in a perfect world everyone would act in this way. Until everyone can agree to treat others with empathy and understanding both on and offline, we will still need to have the term “digital citizenship.”

Another program interested in the topic of character education is the Character Education Partnership (CEP) (<https://character.org>). They too have a framework of principles that drive their work. Their 11 principles help schools to understand their mission of the need for character education. Here are their 11 principles for effective character education (from <http://character.org/more-resources/11-principles/>):

1. The school community promotes core ethical and performance values as the foundation of good character.
2. The school defines “character” comprehensively to include thinking, feeling, and doing.
3. The school uses a comprehensive, intentional, and proactive approach to character development.
4. The school creates a caring community.
5. The school provides students with opportunities for moral action.
6. The school offers a meaningful and challenging academic curriculum that respects all learners, develops their character, and helps them to succeed.
7. The school fosters students’ self-motivation.
8. The school staff is an ethical learning community that shares responsibility for character education and adheres to the same core values that guide the students.
9. The school fosters shared leadership and long-range support of the character education initiative.
10. The school engages families and community members as partners in the character-building effort.
11. The school regularly assesses its culture and climate, the functioning of its staff as character educators, and the extent to which its students manifest good character.

These principles show the connection to good life skills that have been tested over time. Many would look at these principles as skills that parents or grandparents might hand down to their children. These are the skills that are necessary no matter where you are, either online or face-to-face.

The foundation of digital citizenship is closely tied to digital character education. Digital citizenship is about the changing nature of students and people in general with the rise of technology. The ideals and concepts of organizations such as CHARACTER COUNTS! and

CEP and the new concepts of digital citizenship are symbiotic. All are dedicated to the same goal of helping others understand the topics and issues that surround them in this increasingly digital world and providing a foundation to act appropriately. While neither of these organizations have made core changes to their principles and ideals, research and experience show that these are important no matter what technology is being used. The hopes and ideals have not changed: to help children grow up to be responsible, productive adults and pass along the skills they have learned to their children. But they first need to learn these skills in this time of digital growth. Once they know how to be responsible and productive, they can share these ideas with the next generation. Opportunities need to be provided to help students, teachers, and parents move into the digital age, but stay grounded in the beliefs and ideals that have helped to build societies and have stood the test of time.

## The Basics of Digital Citizenship

The popular press increasingly features reports that show a pattern of misuse and abuse related to technology in our schools, homes, and society in general. This pattern of technology misuse is documented in articles, texts, and countless news broadcasts. Some examples include: using text messages or social networking sites to intimidate or threaten students (cyberbullying) (Paulson, 2003); downloading music or movies illegally from the internet (McGuire, 2004); using blogs or social networking sites such as Facebook to complain about teachers, or using cellular phones to text or play games during class time (Urbina, 2003). Unfortunately, the digital world has come up with few rules about what is and is not appropriate behavior for digital citizens. How individuals behave as members of a digital society (both inside and outside school) has become an issue for technology leaders, parents, and society as a whole.

As schools and society become more intertwined with digital technology, there needs to be a structure that can teach students (and parents) how to act with respect to this technology. Very little has been defined in this area. Some stopgap measures have been created, such as acceptable use policies (AUPs) and parent/student contracts, which are designed to help define the rules of technology use in school. The problem is that few of these AUPs or contracts teach the use of digital technology. Most often, these AUPs and contracts simply tell the student what they can and cannot do with technology at school. These rules do not teach students what is appropriate and why, and instead simply define the uses that are restricted in the school setting.

### Essential Questions

What situations has your school or district experienced in which digital technology was an issue? Were they handled to your satisfaction?

How is your district addressing issues related to digital technology?

This book identifies nine essential elements of digital citizenship to help bring some clarity to these technological situations, not only in our schools but in our society as well. Digital citizenship does not stop at the classroom door. Digital technology has become part of nearly every person's daily life, and it should be our goal that individuals will use technology appropriately in all settings, not just at school. Digital citizenship aims to teach everyone (not just children) what technology users must understand in order to use digital technologies effectively and appropriately. If using technology appropriately is a priority for society as a whole, then teaching students how to use it in this manner should be a priority. By learning and understanding these nine elements of digital citizenship, students can learn to recognize inappropriate technological behavior wherever it occurs.

## Definition of the Nine Elements

In this book, digital citizenship is described as the norms of appropriate, responsible behavior with regard to technology use. The nine elements were identified as a way of understanding the complexity of digital citizenship and the issues of technology use, abuse, and misuse: these nine elements comprise digital citizenship. In this edition of *Digital Citizenship in Schools*, the nine elements are organized by the principles of respect, educate, and protect (REP).

Schools need a technology workout. In physical sports, the term “rep” is often a shortening for the word “repetition.” Workouts are often built on repetitions, continuing to work out certain parts of the body. Digital citizenship has a similar workout, with its own set of repetitions or REPs. The three parts of the digital citizenship REPs are respect, educate, and protect. Repeating these three principles throughout the curriculum will help students and teachers understand how to become more responsible users of technology. These topics are not just taught once and then forgotten; the skills are repeated throughout the curriculum. Repetition is used in other parts of the curriculum, such as parts of speech, math facts, and history dates. It is a useful device in technology as well. The REPs are focused not only on discussion, but dedicated to action. Students need to learn how to: respect others and themselves; educate themselves about new technologies and share that knowledge with others; and protect their technology for themselves and with regard to other users. How these three principles are organized with the nine elements will be covered at the end of the next chapter. In addition, there will be some ideas on when to start each of the REPs and how to build upon them.

As members of a digital society, it is our responsibility to provide all users the opportunity to work, interact, and use technology without interference, destruction, or obstruction by the actions of inappropriate users. Good digital citizens work to help create a society of users who help others learn how to use technology appropriately. Everyone should work together to identify the needs of technology users and provide opportunities to make them more efficient.

The nine elements serve as the basis for appropriate technology use and form the foundation on which the digital society is based. They provide a starting place to help all technology users understand the basics of their technology needs. Because there is no way to predict the future, these elements (and possibly others in the future) will help direct users into appropriate usage. By becoming more aware of the issues related to technology, everyone can become better digital citizens and provide opportunities for users to enjoy technology while helping to prevent its misuse and abuse.

ELEMENT 1

**Digital Access**

*Full electronic participation in society. Can all users participate in a digital society at acceptable levels if they choose?*

ELEMENT 2

**Digital Commerce**

*Electronic buying and selling of goods. Do users have the knowledge and protection to buy and sell in a digital world?*

ELEMENT 3

**Digital Communication**

*Electronic exchange of information. Do users understand the various digital communication methods and when each is appropriate?*

ELEMENT 4

**Digital Literacy**

*Process of teaching and learning about technology and the use of technology. Have users taken the time to learn about digital technologies and do they share that knowledge with others?*

ELEMENT 5

**Digital Etiquette**

*Electronic standards of conduct or procedure. Do users consider others when using digital technologies?*

ELEMENT 6

**Digital Law**

*Electronic responsibility for actions and deeds. Are users aware of laws (rules, policies) that govern the use of digital technologies?*

ELEMENT 7

**Digital Rights and Responsibilities**

*Those requirements and freedoms extended to everyone in a digital world. Are users ready to protect the rights of others and to defend their own digital rights?*

## ELEMENT 8

**Digital Health and Wellness**

*Physical and psychological well-being in a digital technology world. Do users consider the risks (both physical and psychological) when using digital technologies?*

## ELEMENT 9

**Digital Security**

*Electronic precautions to guarantee safety. Do users take the time to protect their information while taking precautions to protect others' data as well?*

These nine elements and their core questions form the backbone of digital citizenship and the creation of a digital citizenry. All users of technology must act, as well as teach others in appropriate ways. These should be the duties of all digital citizens.

## Purpose of the Nine Elements

These nine elements were identified to help educators (as well as all users) better understand the variety of topics that constitute digital citizenship and to provide an organized way to address them. Digital citizenship is not a set of ironclad rules; rather, it is a way to conceptualize the challenges facing all technology users. The nine elements are a starting point for preparing students to become full-fledged digital citizens. Depending on the situations, some of the elements may be of more concern to technology leaders while others may be more of a focus for teachers.

As new digital technologies emerge, any framework of rules or codified principles will quickly become incomplete and outdated. Rather than attempting to set rules related to technologies, it is better to identify the underlying issue in order to guide users through this ever-changing digital landscape. Lawmakers are creating laws and establishing policies to protect citizens, but they are not enough. These laws and policies fail to focus on the central issue of technology use in a digital society—knowledge. Users need to have a grounded understanding of technology and its appropriate use. In other words, an individual can become a productive and responsible digital citizen only by learning the principles of digital citizenship.

The focus of this book is to begin that discussion. Coming to a consensus on how everyone will cope with digital technology will be difficult, but schools must begin somewhere. Because our schools encompass our future, this is where the discussion should begin.

### Technology and the Law

Read more about technology and the law in Lawrence Lessig's 2006 book *Code: And Other Laws of Cyberspace, Version 2.0*. published by Basic Books, New York, NY. "Codev2" is also available as a free download online at <http://codev2.cc/download+remix/>.

## Technology in Schools Today— Are AUPs Adequate?

Technology leaders or teachers often remark, “We already have an AUP in our district, and it is working fine.” However, it is often not enough to simply have a policy; students also need to be provided with active direction on what is considered acceptable. Teachers know that the central goal of education is not just reading, science, or math—the central goal is to help students prepare for their future. Technology will continue to be a part of that future. With new and changing technology, users cannot assume that everyone knows what is appropriate and what is not. It is the responsibility of educators and the school community to help define appropriate technology use.

Technology leaders should not assume that their policy, simply because it is in place, is helping students. When researching articles and statistics from schools using AUPs, evidence shows that these policies are, in fact, not working in critical areas when only focused on what students and educators are not to do. These policies need to help direct users on what is expected and how to reach those goals. Perhaps it is worth looking at another type of policy—an empowered use policy (EUP)—which places more responsibility on the students for the choices that they make. These policies focus more on what we want to do, instead of not to do, online. Students and staff need to become more positive about the use of technology in schools

Most administrators know that schools need policies that students can follow and teachers can support. Digital citizenship is important for schools because it provides a flexible structure for these policies. A technology team in a district or site can take the nine elements of digital citizenship and define what their students need to learn in their schools to prepare for the digital future. Moreover, instead of just restricting certain uses of technology, technology leaders can point to the tenets of digital citizenship to show why using technology in a given way is inappropriate.

As the issues change, so must the rules and policies in schools. It is possible to create AUPs that meet the needs of students and faculty. By having AUPs that focus on empowering students, we can hopefully gain more acceptance by students.

### AUP Resources

The work “Critiquing Acceptable Use Policies” (1995–2006) by Dave Kinnaman is available to critique AUPs to make sure they are both complete and focused effectively:

[www.prismnet.com/~kinnaman/auessay](http://www.prismnet.com/~kinnaman/auessay)

New information on creating acceptable use policies has been collected and organized by the Kentucky Department of Education (2011), *Guidelines for Creating Acceptable Use Policies*:

<http://education.ky.gov/districts/tech/Pages/Acceptable-Use.aspx>

Bradley Mitchell has written a useful guide on how to create an AUP, available from About.com:

[http://compnetworking.about.com/cs/intranets/ht/ht\\_createaup.htm](http://compnetworking.about.com/cs/intranets/ht/ht_createaup.htm)

Some districts are looking to place more positive statements in their AUP in hopes of gaining acceptance by students and staff. Here are some examples of statements from an updated AUP:

Users of district based network services will have the knowledge, skills and abilities that allow users to:

- Consider others when using digital technologies.
- Be able to responsibly participate in a digital society provided to them when they access district network resources.
- Abide by the laws, rules, and district policies that govern the use of digital technologies.
- Protect the rights of others and be able to defend their own digital rights.
- Be custodians of their own information while creating precautions to protect others' data as well.

Links to websites with further information about updating AUPs:

Buffalo Trails School District—Canada: [www.btps.ca/documents/general/303-304-1AP%20Exhibit%201%20Student%20Responsible%20Use.pdf](http://www.btps.ca/documents/general/303-304-1AP%20Exhibit%201%20Student%20Responsible%20Use.pdf)

EUP Resources: <http://dangerouslyirrelevant.org/2014/03/instead-of-an-aup-how-about-an-eup-empowered-use-policy.html>

## The New Citizenship

It's not an understatement to say that the digital world has changed how people behave and function as citizens of the "real" world. Users live, work, and interact not only in the physical world, but in a digital, virtual world as well. Educators must prepare students to live in a world without physical boundaries and help them learn how to work with others, virtual or otherwise. "Citizenship" in this sense takes on a new meaning beyond our normal understanding of geographical nations, states, and communities. Indeed, this new citizenship is global in nature. American children will have to learn how to work with technology users from India, China, Russia, and around the world. This is a goal for many districts and organizations, including ISTE, as they state this in each of their standards for students, teachers, administrators, and coaches. A common framework, such as digital citizenship, provides everyone with a starting point for understanding each other.

## Introducing Marialice Curran

The work with digital citizenship is continuing to evolve. One example of this comes from the University of St. Joseph and the work that Professor Marialice Curran (@mbfxc) has been doing with her students. She has been instrumental in creating and expanding the #digcit chat on Twitter.

Teaching this new citizenship goes beyond simply expressing rules and policies. All educators must help students understand that digital technology makes them, in a very real sense, citizens of the world. As such, educators should look at technology not just as a collection of toys or gadgets, but as tools that allow individuals to communicate and, ultimately, create a new society. In short, they need to engage with digital technology in the same way their students already do.

It's not a stretch to say that digital technology has become ingrained in our society, to the point where it is often difficult to separate the technology from the users. Just ask any office worker what he or she would do if the company's computer network went down. The commingling of bits, bytes, headspace, and office space illustrates the importance and challenges of digital citizenship—namely that a balance must be struck between technology and the people who use it. The hope is that one day there will not be a distinction between digital and other citizenship discussions, that the skills we use online will be the same we use face-to-face.

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### VOICES OF EXPERIENCE

## The iCitizen Project

*by Marialice Curran*

At the University of Saint Joseph in West Hartford, Connecticut, teacher candidates explore Mike Ribble's nine elements of digital citizenship. Understanding these elements prepares the teacher candidates to build a foundation to review and examine a variety of curriculum resources. These future teachers are then required to go beyond reading about digital citizenship and begin to *do* digital citizenship. For example, during a first year seminar called, "Pleased to Tweet You: Are You a Socially Responsible Digital Citizen?" college freshmen embarked on a collaborative digital citizenship project—later coined the iCitizen Project—with high school juniors in Birmingham, Alabama. Despite geographical limitations, the project required the two groups of students to think critically and act creatively as they examined cyberbullying and redefined citizenship in the 21st century.

The collaboration via social media was a transformative learning opportunity for the college freshmen and high school juniors. The students were no longer just studying about digital citizenship; they were applying being socially responsible digital citizens through Skype and Twitter. The two groups defined an iCitizen as "an individual who is aware, empathetic, socially responsible, and someone who believes in social justice and models being socially responsible both face-to-face and online."

The iCitizen Project reveals a new heuristic lens to understand citizenship simultaneously through a local, global, and digital perspective. The final multimedia presentation concluded:

The iCitizen Project was put together to promote consciousness and empathy in a digitizing world...[The] First Year Seminar, Pleased to Tweet You, worked with high school juniors in Birmingham, Alabama, to share and create big ideas about what the project means and what we could do to contribute to it. Both classes used Twitter and Skype to communicate with one another, bridging the gap between the two schools and creating an online iCitizen community. We initially put a lot of emphasis and focus on the issue of bullying, and while it does remain a large problem both on and off-line...we felt that teaching empathy first is more effective than trying to stop bullying later. Together we learned what it means to be an active citizen instead of just a resident, an enabler of change, and not a bystander. We learned to humanize the person on the other side of the screen. For a generation who has mostly grown up around computers, it's hard to think there's anything new that you could possibly learn about the internet. But this class has shown us that there is always room to grow, connections to forge and communities to contribute to, both in your backyard and behind the computer screen.

As a direct result of the iCitizen Project, the students became leaders both on and offline; transforming hearts, attitudes, and minds. On Twitter, the students were asked to guest moderate a digital citizenship (#digcit) chat for educators and share their collaborative project. This #digcit chat brings educators across the country and around the world together twice a month to connect and learn with other educators. The educators attending this particular chat applauded the students and encouraged more student voice in Twitter chats.

As a result of the positive feedback from the Twitter chat an iCitizenship Town Hall Meeting was planned for both a live and virtual audience at the University of Saint Joseph. The two-hour town hall event was planned by the students and was live-streamed and live-tweeted for a virtual audience resulting in over 800 tweets. Using a town hall forum, a panel of experts, including the students, was assembled. The event began with a Skype call to Alabama where the high school juniors modeled the power of social media as a learning tool.

Including a live and virtual audience allowed the students to share the iCitizen Project with other students, parents, educators, administrators, and community members (both locally and globally). The high school teacher reflected about the experience:

My students were totally energized by the event. I could not get them to leave school or stop tweeting about it! They [the students] saw the changes they could make in people's perceptions and understanding. And they realized how possible, even easy, it is to connect with people from anywhere and everywhere. They believed what they were doing was not only purposeful, it was necessary. They began to realize that they could literally be the change they wished to see in the world.

The iCitizen Project suggests that by including a global audience via social media, a space was created for the students to take the lead and construct their own meaning around citizenship in the 21st century. There is a need for more collaborative student-based projects where students became socially aware and responsible iCitizens. Applying the iCitizenship Model allows students to gain a better understanding of social justice and empathy, especially when using a variety of social networking sites. It takes a village—this type of learning experience is needed around the world. As more teens continue to consume and produce digital media, the more we need student voices leading the way. Embedding the iCitizen Project into teacher education programs has the potential to revolutionize how we prepare teacher candidates to provide K–12 students an opportunity to understand and model digital citizenship at the local, global and digital level.

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The next chapter focuses on the nine elements of digital citizenship. By exploring these elements, teachers and technology leaders can gain a better understanding of how the issues of digital technology relate to the concept of digital citizenship.