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Why is it important to be a good cyber citizen

What are examples of good cyber citizenship? What is a good cyber citizen? What are three elements of citizenship in the real world? What are the 9 elements of digital citizenship? How can I be cyber smart? What responsibilities do citizens have? What does it mean to be a sovereign citizen? What are the rights of a digital citizen? What does it mean to be digitally responsible? How can I be responsible? How can kids be good digital citizens? How does digital citizenship affect us? How can I practice good digital citizenship? Earlier this month the Obama Foundation launched a project to define and promote 'digital citizenship.' As Founder of Cyber Sensible, my focus has been to encourage parents, students and educators to maintain a positive digital life by employing the power of technology toward their success and well-being. During my workshops, I begin the digital citizenship discussion by asking these questions: What are your rights and responsibilities as a digital citizen? As a global citizen? What role do you have in shaping our shared online culture? Earlier this month the Obama Foundation launched a project to define and promote 'digital citizenship.' As Founder of Cyber Sensible, my focus has been to encourage parents, students and educators to maintain a positive digital life by employing the power of technology toward their success and well-being. During my workshops, I begin the digital citizenship discussion by asking these questions: What are your rights and responsibilities as a digital citizen? As a global citizen? What role do you have in shaping our shared online culture? I ask the students to think about their rights as citizens and about how those freedoms come with limits and responsibilities. For example, the right to vote comes with the responsibility to be informed about the issues and the candidates. The right to pursue the life you want comes with the expectation that it's up to you to make it happen and the understanding that others are free to do the same. Then there are additional expectations of civility such as being a good neighbor, polite in public settings, a productive employee, involved in your community, and so on. The framework for discussion of what it means to be a good citizen in real life (IRL) can then be applied to what it means to be a good citizen online. If you have the right to connect, learn and explore online, you also have the responsibility to know how to keep yourself safe in cyberspace and learn to recognize reliable information sources. You have the right to express yourself but also a responsibility to respect others who do not share your opinion. While fleshing this out it becomes evident that a lot of the expectations and definitions we have for what it means to be a good citizen are directly correlated to what it means to be a good digital citizen. We just need to update and apply those same beliefs, aspirations and expectations to the online environment. I ask the students to think about their rights as citizens and about how those freedoms come with limits and responsibilities. For example, the right to vote comes with the responsibility to be informed about the issues and the candidates. The right to pursue the life you want comes with the expectation that it's up to you to make it happen and the understanding that others are free to do the same. Then there are additional expectations of civility such as being a good neighbor, polite in public settings, a productive employee, involved in your community, and so on. The framework for discussion of what it means to be a good citizen in real life (IRL) can then be applied to what it means to be a good citizen online. If you have the right to connect, learn and explore online, you also have the responsibility to know how to keep yourself safe in cyberspace and learn to recognize reliable information sources. You have the right to express yourself but also a responsibility to respect others who do not share your opinion. While fleshing this out it becomes evident that a lot of the expectations and definitions we have for what it means to be a good citizen are directly correlated to what it means to be a good digital citizen. We just need to update and apply those same beliefs, aspirations and expectations to the online environment. The biggest differences online are that there are no laws governing the global online community and no policing force (other than terms of use by individual platforms) to enforce standards of behavior. So what can we do to encourage a more positive digital citizenship, especially from our kids and teens? I think many schools and communities are missing the mark here because they focus solely on teaching what NOT to do online and don't help their kids develop an understanding of what they SHOULD be doing online. It is extremely important to combat sexting, cyberbullying and other common risky online interactions, but I think that if we focus on being proactive in teaching kids about the benefits of maintaining a positive digital footprint it may better influence them against some of the more hazardous behavior. I believe the first step is to elevate the tech talk and demonstrate all the benefits of using technology in productive, positive and meaningful ways. Following are my 10 recommended habits to adopt in order to become a good digital citizen. Be Cybercivil - There are norms of civil behavior that are sometimes lost in the anonymity that screens can provide. Resolve to own and be proud of the way you behave online. We all must be held accountable to our online behavior as we would in a public place. Being civil, polite and courteous should be expected of everyone who connects. Be Smart - Information online is limitless. The problem is there is also a lot of disinformation and all of us need to learn to recognize the difference. Luckily, some of the most powerful tech companies are working to inform us to be digitally literate. Be Truthful - Every post, retweet, like and comment you make online becomes part of your digital footprint. Take a beat before you hit send and make sure that what you are sharing is truthful and will reflect well on you. Be Safe - "The Internet is no longer a luxury, it is a necessity" to fully participate in our culture and economy. But being fully connected globally does come with some risks, so be sure that you understand how to use the privacy and safety settings on your devices, games, apps, browsers and websites. Make sure you are comfortable with how much information you are sharing online and make any necessary adjustments. If you need help, look for Online Safety Workshops in your area. Be Curious - The Internet is so powerful that we can sometimes take it for granted. You can find out about virtually anything that interests you. Go above and beyond and also seek out different viewpoints, cultures and perspectives so that you can at the very least understand how opposing opinions are shaped. Be Productive - Be more than a consumer of information and entertainment online. Discover what your passions are and share it online. Learn how to code, write a blog, produce a video, create a video game, design a website or share your knowledge online. There's room for all of us to participate, create and contribute. Be Engaged - Our political environment has become more and more heated, especially online. But it is important that all good citizens don't tune out all the information along with the noise. Every one of us should participate in the discussion of our current issues. We need to learn to share our opinions constructively and listen to the other side without anger or fear, especially online where rhetoric can become overheated. Be Connected - We need for our kids to understand how to be protected from unwanted attention online and learn to block unknown profiles. We also need to educate our kids on how to connect with leaders who inspire them, college admissions officers, potential employers and thought leaders. Our kids need the digital skills and savvy to employ social media strategically. They should share their interests and market themselves online to gain the right kind of attention toward a successful future. Be a Role Model - Adults need to be positive digital role models to young people around them. We need to show kids how to use technology responsibly for connection, collaboration, information, and for entertainment. Connect with your kids online as well so they can see how you interact with friends and colleagues. Leading by example is a great way to show the next generation what you expect from them. Be Present - Balance your tech use with an overall healthy lifestyle and learn how to control your tech use, not be controlled by it. Be present at home, limit tech use during family time or in social settings. Show how technology can help you connect, not distract, from the most important people and events in your life. Finally, know when to unplug. The biggest differences online are that there are no laws governing the global online community and no policing force (other than terms of use by individual platforms) to enforce standards of behavior. 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Think of the Internet less as a screen and more of a window - what do you want to see when you look out and what do you want others to see about you when they look in? Then take steps to make the online environment and your digital profile reflect your answer. Creating a positive profile and a supportive community will have a ripple effect. Who knows how far it can go? If we want a more welcoming and inclusive online community, it's up to every one of us to make it happen. To quote President Obama, "Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones that we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek." Being a good digital citizen means presenting yourself online as you would in public. Think about how you want others to view you, how much you want to share with the world, and with whom you want to connect. 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