A framework for implementing digital citizenship education to keep students responsible and build 21st century learning

It’s imperative that we have a common belief that together we CAN prepare students for the future while also protecting them from the threats of the present. Students deserve an educational experience that balances the technical advances available to them with effective policies that teach them citizenship skills, informational literacy, and personal security.--Michael Hakkarinen

Definitions

- Digital citizenship- the ethical and responsible use of technology
- Media Literacy- the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, create, and act using all forms of communication
- Cybersecurity - art of protecting networks, devices, and data from unauthorized access or criminal use and the practice of ensuring confidentiality, integrity, and availability of information
- Social media- any digital technology that allows users to instantly create and share information with the public
- Digital wellness- refers to the physical and psychological well-being in a digital world
- Competencies- transferable skills necessary for success in the modern world
- Digital literacy- adapt, create, consume, and connect in productive, responsible ways to utilize technology in social, academic, and professional settings

Purpose

- Scale and spread digital citizenship professional development to educators
  - Assist educators to incorporate digital citizenship learning in their classroom
  - Provide incentives and additional staff time to incorporate digital citizenship in existing teaching
- Use national and international competencies to improve digital citizenship learning for all K-12 students in Utah public schools
  - Align national and international digital citizenship competencies to the Portrait of a Graduate program

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1 Digital Citizenship in schools: Nine Elements All Students Should Know
2 National Association for Media Literacy Education
3 Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency
4 Digital Citizenship: Teaching Strategies and Practice from the Field
5 Utah State Board of Education, Personalized, Competency-based Learning (PCBL)
6 Utah’s Portrait of a Graduate Competencies
● Create ongoing funding and educator/Local Education Agency (LEA) support for digital citizenship education
● Create a research-based, vetted repository of information on digital citizenship-related resources for schools, parents and caregivers and students
   ○ An oversight advisory board will lead this effort
   ○ Resources on this repository will be evaluated regularly, by a working group of educators, parents, and providers.
   ○ Utah Education Telehealth Network (UETN) will host and maintain the repository
● Strengthen and better coordinate digital citizenship-related work and campaigns with the Utah legislature, Governor’s Office, Utah State Board of Education (USBE), UETN and service providers
   ○ Select a liaison on the Utah State Board of Education to help communicate and coordinate work between the offices and providers
   ○ Create a monthly newsletter related to this work that is shared
● Shift perceptions of technology as a common and necessary tool in today’s society.
● Coordinate with other offices to create a PSA on positives of the internet and digital technology tools and resources.
   ○ Consider other methods (events, contests) in partnership with other agencies and service providers that reach the broader school community
● Update and evaluate digital citizenship-related policies across schools and government agencies
   ○ An oversight board will advise and support policy curation and evaluation

**Why this is important**

The topic of digital citizenship, wellness and safe technology is everyone’s responsibility but no one’s authority. Its principles, competencies and applications are found across multiple agencies, educational subjects and the public and private sector. Funding is also scattered and not always ongoing. Without a coordinated and comprehensive framework, activities in this area will be disjointed, fragmented and siloed. A framework can benefit the number of agencies, individuals and organizations involved in this topic.

Other reasons why a framework is needed include:

● **Utah Privacy Program** is a newly enacted program within the Office of the State Auditor to oversee privacy practices in public entities in the state, which includes states. Part of the program’s goals are to identify and implement competencies and best practices in government privacy and to “develop educational and
training materials based on Utah’s Fundamental Privacy Principles required in 63C-24-202.” A framework can support the goals of the Utah Privacy Program.

- **E-rate funding,** otherwise known as The Schools and Libraries Program of the Universal Service Fund, is a program where schools and libraries can apply for federal funds for internet access, hardware and telecommunications. E-rate funding falls under the work of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). For schools and libraries to qualify for E-rate discounts on internet access and broadband services they must comply with the Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA). This means that schools must “provide for educating minors about appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals on social networking websites and in chat rooms, and cyberbullying awareness and response.”

**Principles**
- Recognize that the internet is a tool that is an essential part of our modern life and students must be taught how to effectively and safely use that tool.
- **Students will violate the rules and make mistakes online.** Our goal should not be to define them by that. What is our response to make students more responsible? Students need the opportunity to learn digital citizenship as they are using technology in all of their subject areas.
- If a student does not have access to the internet, they cannot be a digital citizen. Any work done with digital citizenship must also support broadening high-speed and reliable internet access.
- Utilize existing and research-based competencies to define digital citizenship and what success in a classroom and for a teacher looks like.
- Involve the broader school community in discussions on digital citizenship. Success should not be defined solely by what happens in the classroom, but at home and outside of school.
- While part of digital citizenship education is keeping students safe, it also involves students being creators, advocates and empowered learners. Building 21st century learners keeps students safe. Safety is just one piece of digital citizenship.
- Digital citizenship should not be a one-off lesson focused only on secondary students or in certain subjects. It is a topic that is found in multiple subject areas across all grade levels and needs to be taught in these contexts.

**Update and Evaluate Policies**
An oversight advisory board will lead the effort to advise and support on policy. This effort will include:

1. Agree to shared definition and meaning of digital citizenship Along with 3-5 shared principles that will guide policy.
2. Engage in participatory design with different stakeholders. Create a task force from LEAs, the state legislature, the attorney general’s office, IT leads, school safety/mental health leads, a legal counsel and other institutions involved in digital citizenship to evaluate existing policies and collate them into one place. During this process determine any institutions or areas that there are gaps in policies. Many organizations (USBE, school boards etc.) have digital citizenship policies and laws, but they are not necessarily updated, evaluated and coordinated across multiple channels. Some of these policies may be found with:
   - Social media policies
   - Anti-bullying policies
   - Responsible Use Policies
   - Privacy-related policies/laws (COPPA etc.)
3. Differentiate policies across different levels of responsibility. Once an evaluation and curation of policies are complete, those policies should be adapted to different roles. (i.e. principals vs. teachers, school resource officers vs. Internet Crimes Against Children’s Taskforce members, lawmakers vs. school board members)
4. Translate policies into different languages
5. Create a schedule to evaluate policies and determine who is responsible for that ongoing work.
6. Host the policies on the repository website and share them broadly

**Align competencies**

After determining definitions and evaluating policies stakeholders should explore the alignment of a unified set of principles and competencies. Utah’s Portrait of a Graduate is a model for an agreed-upon set of competencies already used in Utah.

**LEA responsibilities**

1. Address responsibilities in the School Safety and Digital Citizenship Requirements document. [Click here for the link](#)
2. Cyberbullying- ensure that school personnel are attending to USBE cyberbullying guidelines. [Click here for the link](#)
3. Acceptable Use Policy - follow rules and regulations listed in USBE’s guidelines for Acceptable Use Policies. [Click here for the link](#)
4. Add the high level competencies, “what it looks like in these grades.” Look at PoG and CTE standards.

Parent responsibilities
Consider the American Academy of Pediatrics guidelines for screen time for children ages 6 and older: Establish consistent limits on the time spent using media, and the types of media, and make sure it doesn't interfere with adequate sleep, physical activity, and other healthy behaviors. Designate media-free times together, such as during dinner or while driving, as well as media-free locations at home, such as bedrooms.