



The notion of digital citizenship is gaining popularity as people are taking to cyberspace owing to the limitless opportunities it offers. As cyberspace is arguably not limited by the national boundaries and jurisdiction of domestic legislation, a new kind of social contract is needed. The starting point of digital citizenship is equal digital rights and supporting electronic access, which are critical in view of the Government of India's major boost to their use in advancing its policy agenda.

Digital citizenship is primarily about using technology appropriately and creating a culture where technology users are able to protect themselves.

It has nine inter-linked and overlapping components :

- 1 Digital access and handling devices :** Equitable distribution of technology and online resources is an important issue from the perspective of human rights and social justice. In view of the proliferation of digital technologies and access to several essential services depending on digital access, all efforts should be made to bring those without access under the digital umbrella and empower them with digital literacy.
- 2 Digital literacy and fluency :** Understanding technology and its use is the basic condition for optimising its benefits. Going beyond reading and writing, digital literacy encompasses the understanding of how digital media operates, how good information and real news can be discerned from the unlimited reservoir of information and “fake news” respectively, and the ways in which online communication can be effective.
- 3 Digital communication and collaboration :** The electronic exchange of information with other people, through emails, cell-phones and instant messaging, constantly and without delay, requires appropriate decisions by users who are faced with several options. Basic communication principles in tandem with the ever-expanding features of digital devices and technologies highlight the factors that should determine the decisions of the users.

- 4** **Digital etiquette :** Digital etiquette describes the norms or appropriate and responsible behaviors while using technology devices. One needs to be aware of and practice appropriate and ethical behavior in a variety of digital environments. This includes shaping your digital reputation and being a responsible citizen of the communities in which you participate, from school groups, to games, to social networks.
- 5** **Digital health and wellness :** As the number of users of digital devices and technologies and the time they spend on using them is increasing exponentially, the physical, emotional and psychological health and well-being is more important than ever. Knowledge of the ways of preventing and addressing risks and harms associated with continued use of digital technologies is paramount.
- 6** **Digital rights and freedoms :** A collective sense of rights and responsibilities is important in a digital society for maintaining social harmony and increasing productivity. Basic digital rights must be addressed, discussed, and understood and users must help define how the technology is to be used in an appropriate manner.
- 7** **Digital commerce :** Increased buying and selling of goods and services has opened up new vistas for sellers, service providers, and consumers. But there must be tools and safeguards in place to assist them with buying, selling, banking, or using money in any way in the digital space. Such knowledge is particularly important for students who wish to employ the tools of technology in exploring and determining the path to their future.
- 8** **Digital law :** At the core of digital citizenship are basic ethics, which are reflected in national and international laws. Netizens are morally and legally duty bound to exercise caution based on the existing laws and rules that regulate processes influenced by digital technologies and provide protection from criminal activities and civil misdemeanours.
- 9** **Digital security and privacy :** Awareness of potential online risks, threats and attacks and the ways and means of preventing them are important skills to have in an interconnected world. While cautious conduct can ward off attempts at invasion of privacy and manipulation, electronic precautions can secure digital devices and usage. Viruses, worms and other bots can be passed along from one system to another wherever the devices are being used.



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