



Enhancing Digital Citizenship through School Curricula: Concepts and Educational Applications

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Abstract:

The irrational use and handling of technology have become a major problem in our schools. This issue has recently sparked discussions and debates on official newspaper pages, revolving around topics such as children's misuse of computers, technology challenging teachers in schools, and the inappropriate use of mobile devices.

On the other hand, educators and sociologists have emphasized the importance of teaching the values and principles of digital citizenship to our children. Many parents have become aware of the effects of digital openness on their sons and daughters, which has led to the emergence of a new concept known as "digital education," or what is also called digital citizenship. All of this aims to build an active digital citizen. However, the question remains: are our curricula based on this vision or not?

Through this research paper, we will attempt to answer the following questions: What is meant by digital citizenship? What can educators do about the growing problems arising from the use of technology? Accordingly, this study aims to define the term digital citizenship, identify the main educational standards that can be relied upon to instill its values, and explore how it can be implemented in school curricula through a review of the literature related to these standards and applications.

Keywords: education, citizenship, digital citizenship, school curricula.

L'analyse du discours dramatique du point de vue de la sémiotique narrative

La pièce Al-Litham d'Abdelkader Alloula comme modèle

Résumé :

L'utilisation irrationnelle des technologies est devenue un problème majeur dans nos écoles. Cette question a récemment suscité des discussions et des débats dans la presse officielle, portant notamment sur le mauvais usage des ordinateurs par les enfants, les défis posés par les technologies aux enseignants et l'utilisation inappropriée des appareils mobiles.

Parallèlement, les éducateurs et les sociologues ont souligné l'importance d'enseigner aux enfants les valeurs et les principes de la citoyenneté numérique. De nombreux parents ont pris conscience des effets de l'accès au numérique sur leurs enfants, ce qui a conduit à l'émergence d'un nouveau concept : l'« éducation numérique », également appelée citoyenneté numérique. L'objectif est de former des citoyens numériques actifs. Cependant, une question demeure : nos programmes scolaires sont-ils fondés sur cette vision ?

Dans cet article, nous tenterons de répondre aux questions suivantes :

Qu'entend-on par citoyenneté numérique ? Que peuvent faire les éducateurs face aux problèmes croissants liés à l'utilisation des technologies ? Cette étude vise donc à définir le terme de citoyenneté numérique, à identifier les principales normes éducatives permettant d'en inculquer les valeurs et à explorer comment l'intégrer aux programmes scolaires à travers une analyse de la littérature relative à ces normes et à leurs applications.

Mots-clés : *éducation, citoyenneté, citoyenneté numérique, programmes scolaires.*



Introduction:

The digital communication revolution, with all the ease and speed it provides in communicative processes and in accessing sources of information, has undoubtedly yielded significant positive effects on individuals and society – *if* modern communication and technological tools are used appropriately. However, it is equally clear to all of us that this revolution also carries negative consequences, which become evident when ethical rules, legal regulations, and the fundamental principles governing human life are violated.

Understanding our children's interests and monitoring their relationships with others have now become urgent necessities. Through their online interactions with digital strangers who may pose serious threats, and their frequent visits to suspicious and dangerous websites, it has become nearly impossible to monitor everything they view or everyone they contact. This is due to the widespread use of modern digital devices and smartphones everywhere – at home, among peer groups, and even in schools.

Scientific studies have shown that children and adolescents may spend up to eight hours a day using these devices – more than the time they spend with their parents and teachers. These technologies, therefore, represent the strongest influence on our children. It remains our responsibility to choose whether this influence will be **negative**, when we neglect and fail to guide them, or **positive**, when we teach them the rules of proper use, provide direction, and protect them from potential dangers.

Research Problem:

The era we live in today is commonly referred to as the *digital age* or the *technological age*, due to the technological boom that characterizes it. Dependence on technological means has become inevitable, as it now touches nearly every aspect of our lives.

Living in this era requires that the younger generation understand how to use digital technologies safely – away from irresponsible or unethical use – and in a lawful manner so that they may become good digital citizens and lifelong learners. It is within this context that the term “**digital citizen**” emerged, coined by university professor **Marc Prensky**, to describe individuals who were born and raised in an environment saturated with technology, where computers, video games, and mobile phones have become its most distinctive features.

Given the nature and demands of life in the digital age, it has become essential to educate our children in ways that enable them to live safely and effectively within it, through various approaches – one of which could be the **digital citizenship approach**. The digital dimension has become the cornerstone of today’s citizenship, through which individuals can be prepared to become responsible digital citizens. This is what the present study seeks to clarify and emphasize.

Accordingly, the research problem is defined through an attempt to answer the following main questions:

1. What is meant by citizenship and digital citizenship, and what are their main components and dimensions?
2. What are the most important standards that educators rely on in developing digital citizenship?



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3. How can digital citizenship education standards be integrated into some school curricula?
4. What are the justifications that call for adopting a digital citizenship approach in Arab education?
5. How can the digital citizenship approach be effectively used in Arab education in the digital era?

In light of this, the present paper will be divided into **two main axes**.

1. The Conceptual Significance of the Study's Terms

1.1. Education

• Linguistically:

According to *Lisān al-‘Arab*, the verb *raba* means “to increase and grow,” and *rabaytuhu* means “I nurtured or developed it” (**Ibn Manzur**, 1968, p. n.d.). In the Qur’an, the verse “and He multiplies charities” means “He increases them.” The expression “I grew up among such-and-such people” also reflects development and upbringing.

In *Al-Mu‘jam al-Wasīṭ*, *tarabba* means “to be raised, nourished, and educated,” and *rabbāhu* means “to develop his physical, intellectual, and moral faculties” (*Al-Mu‘jam al-Wasīṭ*, 1960, p. n.d.).

• Terminologically:

Many educators, both ancient and modern, have tried to provide a comprehensive definition of education, yet they have differed greatly depending on their understanding of its purpose and objectives in society. Among the definitions proposed in this regard (**René**, 1967, p. 23), we may refer to those of **Jean-Jacques Rousseau** and **John Dewey**:

- **Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1778-1812)** stated that “the goal of education is not to fill the child’s mind with

information, but to refine his intellectual powers and make him capable of educating himself.”

- **John Dewey (1859–1952)** defined education as “not merely a preparation for life, but life itself.” He added that “education is indeed teaching, but we must first live, and learn through life itself.”

Accordingly, education is the process of adaptation between the individual and his social and natural environment. Like all other living beings, humans constantly strive to preserve their existence and seek ways to modify their behavior, develop their abilities, and acquire habits and skills useful for life.

1.1.1. The Concept of Citizenship

The *Global Arabic Encyclopedia* defines citizenship as “a term that refers to belonging to a nation or homeland.” In the *Dictionary of Sociology*, it is defined as “a status or a social relationship between a natural person and a political community (a state), in which the first party offers loyalty and the second provides protection, with the relationship between the individual and the state being regulated by law” (**Mohamed**, 1995, p. 56).

From a psychological perspective, **Fathi Hilal** and others view it as “a feeling of belonging and loyalty to the homeland and its political leadership, which serves as the source of satisfaction for basic needs and protection against existential dangers” (**Fathi et al.**, 2000, p. 25).

Historically, the concept of citizenship – or its equivalents – has been associated with granting equality to some or most citizens, as described by **Robert Dahl** in his analysis of contemporary democratic practice (**Ali**, 2004, p. 77).



Citizenship extends far beyond the literal meaning of the term. Since *citizenship* derives from *nation*, and the nation is both the origin and the essence, the word is contained within a broader framework: the **nation-state** (Atif, 2007, p. 131).

“**Citizenship**” refers to the status of being a citizen, which defines a person’s rights and national duties. An individual understands his rights and performs his duties through civic education. Citizenship is characterized by a particular type of loyalty to the homeland and by serving it in times of peace and war, as well as cooperating with other citizens through institutional, individual, official, and voluntary efforts to achieve common goals, for which plans are drawn and budgets are set (Ahmed, 1982, p. 60).

The concept of citizenship has long been linked to humanity’s struggle for justice, equality, and fairness, long before the term and its equivalents became established in political, intellectual, and educational literature. This struggle intensified and took the form of social movements since the emergence of agricultural states in Mesopotamia, passing through the civilizations of **Sumer, Assyria, Babylon, Egypt, China, India, and Persia**. These civilizations and their ensuing political ideologies helped lay the foundations of freedom and equality that transcended rulers’ will, opening broad horizons for humankind to affirm their nature, assert their identity, and claim their right to participate effectively in decision-making and in shaping their destinies (Ahmed S., 1999, p. 5).

In Europe, **Dr. Ali Khalifa Al-Kuwari** identifies three major and interrelated transformations that contributed to establishing the principles of citizenship in the modern nation-state:

1. The emergence of the nation-state as a result of the struggle between kings and the church, which ended with subjects' allegiance to their own king and his religion, within societies defined by their national identity, history, and distinctive culture.
2. Political participation, which emerged from the mutual needs of the state and its people, resulting in the recognition of reciprocal rights and shared involvement in political life and its oversight.
3. The rule of law, which spread across nation-states that established written laws regulating social, political, and economic relations. These laws continued to develop to meet societal needs, and their formulation eventually shifted – gradually, as in Britain, or revolutionarily, as in France and America – to the people, who became the source of authority and legislation. This marked the pinnacle of **citizenship** (Ali Kh., 2001, p. 66).

Some sociologists have sought to identify new forms of citizenship emerging from current global developments. Among the most prominent is **John Urry**, professor of sociology at **Lancaster University** in Britain, who, in his study on globalization and citizenship, highlighted several new forms of citizenship:

1. **Ecological Citizenship**: concerned with the rights and duties of the “citizen of the Earth.”
2. **Cosmopolitan Citizenship**: concerned with how individuals develop attitudes toward other citizens, societies, and cultures across the globe.
3. **Mobile Citizenship**: concerned with the rights and responsibilities of visitors in different places and cultures (Al-Sayyid, 2005, p. 68).



Furthermore, several **levels of citizenship awareness** can be identified:

1. An individual's sense of shared bonds with other members of the community – such as blood, neighborhood, homeland, lifestyle, customs, traditions, systems, values, beliefs, professions, and laws.
2. An individual's awareness of the continuity of this community through time – recognizing that his generation is both a result of the past and the seed of the future.
3. A sense of belonging to the homeland and identification with the community – perceiving one's destiny as intertwined with that of the nation.
4. The integration of this awareness into a unified vision, direction, and collective movement (**Radwan**, 1960, p. 127).

Thus, the concept of **citizenship** implies a relationship between the state (or homeland) and the citizen, founded upon the individual's social and political competence. Active citizenship requires that individuals possess essential qualities enabling them to influence public life and participate effectively in political processes and decision-making.

1.2. Dimensions of Citizenship

Citizenship is a complex historical concept with multiple dimensions – legal, social, cultural, behavioral, and political, among others. These dimensions can be outlined as follows:

1.2.1. The Legal Dimension

Citizenship is, above all, a **legal status**. It primarily includes the right to vote and to be elected, but it also encompasses a set of rights and freedoms that every citizen should enjoy, subject only to the limits imposed by society. Legally, citizenship refers to the relationship between the individual and the state as a geographical and political entity, defined and governed by constitutional and legal provisions. These provisions establish, on the basis of equality, the rights and duties of individuals and the means through which they can exercise their rights and fulfill their obligations.

Typically, **nationality** serves as the main criterion for determining who qualifies as a citizen; it defines the political, civil, economic, and social rights and duties that follow.

1.2.2. The Social Dimension

The defining point of an individual as a citizen lies in his **belonging** to a community of individuals (citizens) living within a recognized geographical territory. Belonging is a process through which identity is formed, and loyalty follows from the understanding and internalization of that identity and its meaning.

1.2.3. The Cultural-Behavioral Dimension

The **practice of citizenship** in reality is closely related to the prevailing cultural system within a society. Customs, values, traditions, and social norms unconsciously shape the individual's integration into social life according to specific conditions established by the community. These, in turn,



determine the rights and duties of individuals and how they are exercised in practice.

1.2.4. *The Political Dimension*

In contemporary contexts, citizenship appears less as a mere legal status tied to nationality and more as an **active civic behavior** that involves daily participation in community life. A good citizen is engaged in public affairs at all levels. This includes the freedom to form political parties, the right to protest and demonstrate, and participation in shaping the political system.

Components of Citizenship

Citizenship comprises essential components that must coexist to ensure its full realization:

1) **Belonging**

Belonging is defined as the tendency that drives an individual to be part of a specific social or intellectual framework, adhering to its principles and defending it against competing frameworks (Naglà, 1999, p. 57).

Although the concept of *social belonging* is complex and somewhat ambiguous, it remains one of the most frequently discussed notions in modern sociological and educational literature.

Sociologists usually identify two interrelated criteria for determining an individual's belonging:

- The **subjective cultural factor**, reflected in emotional and intellectual loyalty to a particular group or belief.
- The **objective social factor**, represented by the concrete realities of the social environment

surrounding the individual – in other words, actual belonging.

Thus, **loyalty** represents the subjective side of belonging, expressing the deepest emotional and affective connection between the individual and his community (**Dr. Ali**, 2003, p. 133).

2) Rights

Citizenship inherently entails **rights** enjoyed by all citizens, which simultaneously constitute **obligations** upon the state and society.

Most constitutions derive citizens' rights from **human rights charters**, notably:

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948).
- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, both adopted by the United Nations in 1966.

Among these rights are:

1. The right to **education**.
2. The right to **basic services**, including clean housing, healthcare, social security, a clean environment, and public safety ([Iraqi Parliament, official site](#)).

3) Duties

Countries differ in how they define the scope and nature of citizens' **duties**, depending on their political philosophies. For example, in Iraq, participation in elections is considered a **national duty**, while in other countries it may not be. Some key civic duties in Iraq include:

1. Respecting the law and public order.



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2. Countering rumors that promote division or fuel political, social, or sectarian conflict.
3. Avoiding acts of treason against the homeland.
4. Preserving public property.
5. Defending the country in case of invasion or external aggression.
6. Cooperating and showing solidarity with fellow citizens.
7. Performing governmental and community duties with honesty, precision, and dedication to public service.

Education for Citizenship

The goal of education for citizenship is to shape a conscious and responsible human being – a citizen who practices his rights and duties within the community to which he belongs. This involves systematically nurturing, from early childhood, the skills and capacities necessary to protect one's identity, exercise one's rights, and fulfill one's responsibilities with awareness and accountability, thereby enabling constructive engagement with one's environment.

Citizenship education is grounded in an awareness of a nation's historical and cultural heritage and a commitment to developing, defending, and enriching it through scientific, intellectual, and ethical means – while respecting others' specificities, learning from diverse experiences, and engaging in meaningful dialogue among civilizations.

The sense of citizenship and belonging grows through self-discovery and through an understanding of one's environment. Knowledge and experience lead individuals to form convictions and perceptions about their existence and to become aware of their rights, social context, and cultural

identity. This awareness allows them to form and discuss opinions and attitudes in light of the noble values of citizenship.

Moreover, citizenship education helps individuals develop skills and abilities that foster creativity and innovation, enabling them to contribute to the nation's development through motivation, encouragement, and perseverance.

Citizenship education addresses:

- The **mind**, by providing knowledge about the nation's history, culture, rights, and responsibilities.
- The **heart**, by nurturing a system of values and ethics that inspire pride, devotion, and a spirit of sacrifice.
- The **senses and skills**, by developing communicative, technical, and scientific competences that empower individuals to innovate, represent their country effectively, and defend its cultural and civilizational identity.

1.3. Definition of Digital Citizenship

Digital citizenship refers to the set of rules, regulations, standards, norms, ideas, and principles governing the proper and optimal use of technology, which citizens – both young and old – need (Jamal, 2016, p. 79) in order to contribute to the advancement of their nation. In short, digital citizenship is both guidance and protection: guidance toward the benefits of modern technologies and protection from their dangers. Or, in even simpler terms, it is the intelligent interaction with technology.

We should not understand the concept of digital citizenship as an attempt to impose restrictions or barriers for the sake of control and surveillance – control for control's



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sake – which sometimes leads to repression and authoritarianism against users in ways that contradict the values of freedom, social justice, and human rights.

Rather, digital citizenship aims to find the right path to guide and protect all users, especially children and adolescents, by encouraging desirable behaviors and discouraging undesirable ones in digital interactions, in order to create a digital citizen who loves their country and strives for its progress.

Digital citizenship can also be defined as the **set of behavioral norms** applied to the various uses of technology, such as electronic information exchange, full electronic participation in society, and online buying and selling, among others.

It is also described as the ability to participate in society through the Internet, and a digital citizen is one who uses the Internet regularly and effectively (Mustafa Al-Qaid, *The Concept of Digital Citizenship / Digital Citizenship*, see website: <http://www.new-educ.com/definition-of-digital-citizenshi>).

Digital citizenship is also defined as preparing pupils and students to use computer technology effectively and appropriately by developing their knowledge of word processing programs and various communication software, while instilling in them the correct concept of digital citizenship and how to apply it appropriately (Sobhi & Mohammed, 2014, p. 143).

The concept of digital citizenship is therefore strongly connected to the educational system, as it helps teachers, educators, and parents understand what students must know to use technology properly.

Digital citizenship is more than just an educational tool – it is a means of preparing students for full engagement in society and for active participation in serving national interests in general and in the digital sphere in particular.

There is no doubt that spreading the culture of digital citizenship within the home among family members and within schools among students has become an urgent necessity.

It must be transformed into programs and projects in our schools and universities, alongside civil society and media initiatives, so that we may truly enhance our societies' protection from the growing negative impacts of technology while maximizing its benefits for the development of the knowledge society and the construction of a national digital economy.

In upcoming articles, God willing, we will further discuss the most important rules, regulations, and guidelines established by digital citizenship, in an effort to promote this culture that our Arab educational systems unfortunately lack.

We hold great hope that efforts will unite to spread this culture officially and widely (Mustafa Al-Qaid, *The Concept of Digital Citizenship / Digital Citizenship*, see website: <http://www.new-educ.com/definition-of-digital-citizenshi>).

Justifications for the Necessity of Using the Digital Citizenship Approach in Education

Spreading the culture of digital citizenship within the family and among students at school has become an urgent necessity.

It must be transformed into programs and projects in our schools and universities, in parallel with civil society and



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media initiatives, to truly strengthen the protection of our societies from the increasing negative effects of technology while maximizing its benefits for developing the knowledge society and building the national digital economy.

Several major justifications support this need (Jamal, 2016, p. 86):

- The continuous increase in the number of Internet users: the number of Internet users worldwide rose from 300 million in 2000 to more than 3 billion in 2015.
- The topic of digital citizenship has gained significant momentum worldwide, whether referred to as *digital citizenship*, *digital wellness*, or *digital ethics*, etc. Digitization has come to occupy the core of modern governmental transformation, and the adoption of digital technologies in governance yields tremendous benefits for governments and their operations. Thus, “digital citizenship” is a project whose mission is to prepare a society capable of dealing with electronic issues by promoting a culture of cybersecurity across all age groups in the community (Jamal, 2016, p. 87).
- Promoting a culture of digital citizenship can help maximize the benefits of digital technology, facilitate the entry of societies into the knowledge economy, and strengthen their contribution to its development and the building of the national digital economy. Within such frameworks, the digital citizen is one who loves their country, thinks of the public good, and uses technology in ways that protect both self and society.

- The concept of digital citizenship is closely related to education, since education enables teachers, educators, and parents to understand what students must know to use technology properly. Digital citizenship is more than an educational tool—it is a means of preparing students to fully engage in society and to participate effectively in serving the nation’s interests in general and in the digital sphere in particular.
- Technology and modern means of communication are no longer luxuries or entertainment tools, nor are they limited to the wealthy. They have become a social necessity—essential for a dignified life—and an indispensable means of communication and of obtaining educational, informational, and service-related benefits (Jamal, 2016, p. 88).

The spirit of rebellion fostered by digital media has created negative effects on national spirit among the youth, as studies show a decline in levels of patriotism and public service motivation. Yet national spirit remains capable of curing many social problems, reviving civic engagement, and inspiring citizens to serve others within their homeland.

1.4. School Curricula

The term curriculum originates from a Greek word meaning the path or method followed by an individual to reach a specific goal. The concept of the school curriculum has evolved over time.

In its traditional conception, it referred to the sum of information, facts, concepts, and ideas that students study in the form of school subjects — commonly known as syllabi.



However, the modern concept of the curriculum differs from the traditional one because the school curriculum has developed as a result of several factors, including:

1. The **cultural change** resulting from scientific and technological progress.
2. The **change in educational objectives** and in the perception of the school's role due to the transformations in modern societal needs.
3. The **findings of scientific research** addressing multiple aspects of the traditional curriculum, which revealed fundamental shortcomings in its structure and concept (see website: <http://www.manhal.net/art/s/1692>).

According to **Regan**, the curriculum encompasses *all educational experiences that take place within the school and for which the school is responsible* (Ali et al., 1993, pp. 20–21). Although the definitions differ in content, they all share a common focus on **objectives, content, methods, means, and evaluation**.

2. Practical Models of Digital Citizenship in School Curricula

According to what has been discussed above, digital citizenship should be taught at all educational levels, from kindergarten to secondary school, by integrating it into various subjects. The following are practical models for embedding digital citizenship in school curricula:

Model One: Using Blogs in Teaching Social Studies

(Sobhi & Mohammed, 2014, p. 143)

For more than a decade, teachers have been developing classroom websites to share information with students and parents.

To employ the Internet in teaching social studies, planning began for **virtual field trips** and for teaching the basics of **online research**.

Today, with technological development, we can integrate Internet-based interaction techniques into the primary education curriculum.

While traditional classroom websites only allowed teachers to share information with parents, **blogs** now provide both teachers and students the ability to **write and publish directly on the web through live interaction**.

It is now possible to publish ideas, classroom news, and study materials related to the social studies curriculum.

Blogs are often described as **electronic journals** that can be easily updated to reflect users' thoughts. Through them, students become more engaged and active in reading and writing online.

This happens when the reader interacts with the author by responding to and commenting on what is written.

Blogging has become a **useful tool for teachers** to enhance the teaching of social studies. For example, when teachers use blogs to plan, organize, and document a field trip related to social studies, it turns into a **project-based learning activity** that makes use of various online resources, thereby making learning more **interactive and meaningful** for students.



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In conclusion, blogs provide teachers and students with the ability to connect with multiple online resources for virtual trips that cannot be conducted in real life.

Students can blog about educational projects related to historical sites, archaeological landmarks, and natural environments.

They can also use blogs to announce classroom activities, while teachers can link the Internet directly to their teaching practices and course content.

Model Two: Using Virtual Reality Technologies in Teaching Science

The **WHYVILL** model represents a **virtual reality community** on the Internet based on **inquiry, learning, and learner-centered education**, suitable for students aged **9 to 14 years**.

WHYVILL was created in **1999** by science educators interested in establishing online virtual environments for children.

The program aimed to build a **virtual scientific community** that enables students to engage in discovery, communication, interaction, and science learning.

This community has its **own political, economic, and media systems**, in addition to **interactive scientific games**.

Each user has a **username, password, and avatar** that allows them to browse the community, chat with others, and participate in scientific activities.

The main components of the program are **hands-on and simulation-based activities** that connect disciplines such as **chemistry, biology, physics, and the history of science**.

Participants representing diverse virtual groups attempt to **transfer the knowledge, values, and practices of their real communities** into a virtual form that mimics reality. This offers these groups opportunities that are difficult or costly to experience in the real world.

The WHYVILL community includes about **900,000 users**, with around **25,000 daily visitors**, and **females represent 67%** of its members (Sobhi & Mohammed, 2014, p. 143).

The above clearly shows that our children need **clear and comprehensive programs and measures** that enable them to live efficiently and safely in the digital age. This can be achieved by preparing and nurturing a **digital citizen** capable of handling various technological tools professionally, aware of the potential risks, conscious of their rights and responsibilities, and able to protect their **data, privacy, and intellectual property**.

Such a demanding task cannot be achieved through individual effort alone; it requires **systematic education** adapted to age stages, behavioral characteristics, and cognitive abilities. This can be realized through what is known as the **digital citizenship and digital education approach**.

Hence emerges the **importance and role of educational institutions** in cultivating an aware digital citizen who understands the dimensions of digital culture and can apply them effectively in daily life.

Curricula should therefore **devote proper attention** to these aspects, proportional to social needs and potential technological risks.

Teachers must act as **professional and educational references** in the technological and informational fields, not as passive figures performing routine daily tasks.



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The **school environment** must provide students with the necessary technologies that help them understand the technological and digital reality around them.

All of this, however, will remain mere aspirations unless **educational policies** adopt **clear plans and diverse strategies** to educate a contemporary human being who combines **authenticity and modernity** in thought, behavior, and convictions.

There is a near-consensus on the necessity for the **educational system** to play its role in instilling **citizenship values** in general among students. However, disagreement arises regarding *how* this should be achieved. It is also agreed that this role should be **continuous**, beginning in childhood and extending through maturity and adulthood.

In fact, there are several **justifications** highlighting the role of educational institutions in promoting **citizenship in general** and **digital citizenship in particular**, including:

- The **educational institution** represents a social and cultural environment with its own traditions, objectives, philosophy, and laws designed to align with the broader culture, goals, and philosophy of society as a whole. It interacts *within and with* that society, influencing and being influenced by it, with the aim of achieving its **political, social, and economic objectives**.
- The need to design school curricula for early grades that address both the advantages and disadvantages of digital communication, how to benefit from it, and the etiquette of using such means. They should also teach the concept of electronic responsibility, the individual's boundaries in digital spaces, and

methods of verifying online information, all to ensure better use of technology and to prepare citizens who live in harmony with themselves and their values despite the overwhelming flow of information that may conflict with their society's culture.

These curricula should be designed and implemented by qualified educators, to teach students the methods and techniques for proper Internet use, protect them from the harms of digital culture, and create active digital citizens who use modern technologies effectively to serve and protect their societies and nations—avoiding harm, defamation, or cybercrimes.

- The development of teacher training programs to meet the requirements of preparing students for the digital age and equipping them to teach in classrooms that rely on advanced educational technologies and innovative strategies to keep pace with the rapid environmental changes—such as virtual classrooms, new content knowledge, and modern teaching strategies available in online educational systems. These programs should also include continuous online communication with graduates to exchange new teaching practices and benefit from them.
- The inclusion of digital citizenship and its various domains in certain courses across different educational levels—especially in higher education—by approaching it from different perspectives. For instance, faculties of education can address topics such as the optimal use of information technology and the ethical aspects of interacting with computers and modern technologies.



Digital Education as an Approach to Fostering the Values of Digital Citizenship

Today, our society is in urgent need of school-, university-, and community-based initiatives and educational programs that promote *digital citizenship education*, in order to protect our children and youth and enhance their safety against the increasing negative uses of modern technology in the digital age—particularly by raising awareness about cybersecurity and online safety when using the Internet and mobile devices. This involves cultivating a culture and ethics of responsible interaction with digital technology (Jamal, 2016, p. 90).

Just as the digital revolution has transformed the nature and features of everyday life activities, its impact has also extended to the educational environment, bringing about corresponding changes in its nature, structure, and concepts. Consequently, new educational paradigms have emerged in response to this revolution—referred to by some scholars as *digital education* or *education for digital citizenship*. This approach seeks to shape an effective digital citizen guided by ethical frameworks that protect them from the dangers of cyberspace. Its ultimate aim is to empower learners to interact meaningfully with the outcomes of the digital revolution—to understand how this revolution influences their lives and societies, and how to benefit from it safely and appropriately.

Such education contributes to developing students' skills in using digital technologies and navigating online networks, alongside fostering their *critical thinking* abilities regarding the content they encounter. It represents a guided process involving teachers and learners—or parents and

children—that promotes the purposeful and educational use of digital tools and resources. Its goal is to develop the skills and behaviors necessary for individuals to become active and responsible *digital citizens*, capable of engaging with others both through direct communication and within learning environments (Jamal, 2016, p. 91).

Effectively integrating various digital communication media—especially information networks—serves to encourage learners to keep pace with ongoing changes and developments across knowledge fields. In this era of rapid information flow, this entails making efficient educational use of the Internet, email, and other communication tools. Consequently, dialogue and discussion should be employed as teaching strategies to help students acquire communication skills, respect for others’ opinions and ideas, and active listening skills.

This further requires that university students and school learners be given opportunities to participate in *forums, blogs, discussions, and online communities* that address issues relevant to their present and future. Likewise, universities and schools should actively organize similar interactive activities within their own institutions.

Conclusion

A close examination of our present reality reveals the pressing need to change our perspective toward the immense technologies that have entered our lives and those of our children—an era rightfully called *the digital age*. It has thus become essential to reconsider various aspects of *Arab education*—its philosophy, objectives, curricula, and



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procedures – so that they align with the nature of life in this new era.

The *digital citizenship approach* is among the most appropriate educational models for Arab education in the digital age, as it offers significant advantages in instilling the values of citizenship among younger generations. Indeed, there are multiple reasons that make it necessary to adopt this approach as a foundation for education in the Arab world today.

Implementing *digital citizenship education* within school curricula has become a necessity to raise awareness among educators and members of society alike about the cultural dimensions of digital citizenship.

In light of the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Integrate specific values of citizenship – particularly the scientific values and behaviors associated with digital citizenship – into educational programs and curricula, using appropriate methods and strategies.
2. Design and implement activities that revolve around the scientific values of digital citizenship, ensuring that they have clear, achievable objectives and that students participate in planning and executing them collaboratively.
3. Provide diverse educational resources that positively impact Arab societies, especially the Algerian context, ensuring that these materials are engaging, accessible, and conducive to student exploration, analysis, and application.
4. Foster communication between various social groups and institutions to exchange information and promote

digital citizenship values among teachers and learners by embedding related standards within school curricula.

5. Encourage researchers and scholars in the social sciences to conduct further studies – such as *the role of universities in cultivating digital citizenship values* and *the contribution of socialization institutions to digital citizenship education* – and to expand research in these areas.

Finally, this paper emphasizes the crucial need for *parents, teachers, faculty members, and all community stakeholders* to actively strengthen a culture of responsible and beneficial digital technology use among youth. They should train them to practice all aspects of digital citizenship through relevant educational activities, acknowledging the urgent necessity of preparing the younger generation to live safely and responsibly in the digital era.

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