

Do Students Need a
Technology Driver's License?

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You need a driver's license to drive. You need a pilot's license to fly. Why don't you need to have a driver's license to navigate with digital technology?

Consider the following scenarios:

1. A cell phone rings in class.
2. Students "flame" other students in email messages.
3. Students share music files with each other on a regular basis.
4. Students copy and paste materials without giving credit to the source or authors.

Sound familiar? The problem is that students are using, misusing, and abusing technology without understanding technology citizenship—digital citizenship. What is digital citizenship? *Digital citizenship can be defined as the norms of behavior with regard to technology use.* Misusing and abusing technology is a major problem in schools. While it might sound like an extreme idea, we believe that schools should require a digital citizenship license. In our opinion, teachers should issue a digital citizenship license to each student before they begin to navigate the waters of technology.

What would a digital driver's license look like? The following 20-item digital citizenship license/quiz will give you an idea. The questions are grouped by themes gleaned from the literature. Each of the nine major themes is defined and include: (1) digital etiquette (2) digital communication, (3) digital education, (4) digital access, (5) digital commerce, (6) digital responsibility, (7) digital rights, (8) digital safety, and (9) digital security (self-protection). For more information on digital citizenship see <http://coe.ksu.edu/digitalcitizenship>. Following the quiz, you will find the answer for each question with a brief explanation.

Digital Etiquette: *electronic standards of conduct or protocol.*

1. During school hours the correct cell phone ringer setting is:
 - A. low
 - B. vibrate
 - C. specialized ring tone
 - D. high
2. Personal Data Assistants (PDAs) should be used in class for:
 - A. exchanging ideas from class discussion
 - B. exchanging answers during the test
 - C. playing games
 - D. sending messages during a teacher's lecture

Digital Communication: *electronic exchange of information.*

3. E-mail messages should be:
 - A. long and full of details
 - B. made up of many ideas
 - C. short and to the point
 - D. sent without a subject line

4. Instant Messaging (IM) is a good tool for:
 - A. gossiping about students or teachers
 - B. eliciting good discussions on the class topic
 - C. wasting class and study time
 - D. segregating others from a discussion

Digital Education: *process of teaching and learning about technology and the use of technology.*

5. The most appropriate use of technology in schools is to:
 - A. electrify what we have done in the past
 - B. help teachers align their curriculum with the standards
 - C. only write papers
 - D. play games during class

6. Online learning is:
 - A. too difficult and not worth the time
 - B. hard to follow and confusing
 - C. like trying to take a class without a teacher
 - D. an opportunity to get an education without traveling

Digital Access: *full electronic participation in society regardless of gender, race, age, ethnicity, and physical or mental challenges.*

7. Assistive technologies for people with disabilities are:
 - A. necessary for some users to access information
 - B. not needed
 - C. too expensive to be considered
 - D. only needed for a few students

8. The differences between those with access to technology and those without is:
 - A. not a big deal because technology is a luxury
 - B. something that can never be fixed
 - C. a concern and needs to be addressed by the school/district
 - D. not a priority for school/districts

9. Technology based assignments should be:
- A. avoided because some students may not have access to technology at home
 - B. integrated into the classroom
 - C. approached cautiously for fear of offending someone
 - D. assigned for out-of-class work only

Digital Commerce: *electronic buying and selling of goods.*

10. Purchasing goods and services online is:
- A. a waste of time because goods sold on the internet are a scam
 - B. something that everyone has learned at home
 - C. a skill which should be taught (i.e., correctly and safely)
 - D. not needed by students in schools
11. Searching for information about products online before buying is:
- A. a good idea and often allows for finding the best price
 - B. too time consuming
 - C. a lot of work and not very informative
 - D. not helpful, because it is difficult to find products online

Digital Responsibility: *electronic responsibility for actions and deeds which is either ethical or unethical.*

12. Information on the internet is:
- A. available for anyone to use as they want
 - B. copyrighted and should be treated as other's property
 - C. easy to copy and paste so it looks like something original
 - D. unreliable and should be held suspect
13. Sharing musical or entertainment files online:
- A. doesn't hurt anyone because musicians and actors make enough money
 - B. is caused by greedy companies
 - C. is illegal and should not be done
 - D. keeps the musician or actor popular

Digital Rights: *those freedoms extended to every student, administrator, teacher, parent or community member.*

14. If someone puts copyrighted material on the internet and another person wants to use it, that person should:
- A. use it, if it is for educational use
 - B. take it, and use it as they want
 - C. not use the information because it is too much trouble
 - D. ask permission from the author or at least cite the source

15. In schools, students should:
- A. have the ability to do whatever they want online
 - B. follow the Acceptable Use Policies of the school/district
 - C. be able hack into other student's e-mail or web pages
 - D. decide their own rules for using technology

Digital Safety: *free from digital danger and guaranteed digital physical well being.*

16. Physical injuries related to technology use:
- A. is not a big deal and is not a major concern
 - B. will not happen for many years, so should not be a priority
 - C. can have dramatic and painful effects on your body
 - D. is not a concern for schools
17. Furniture and chairs for technology should be:
- A. the right height and size for using that technology
 - B. any size because it doesn't matter to students
 - C. bigger than the students to allow them to stretch
 - D. soft and flexible so the students can be comfortable

Digital Security (self-protection): *taking necessary precautions to guarantee electronic digital safety.*

18. When dealing with strangers, online users should:
- A. give personal information freely
 - B. be cautious about giving information
 - C. provide passwords and credit information if asked
 - D. not tell anyone about people they meet online
19. To protect a computer from virus, a user should:
- A. never open an e-mail message
 - B. unplug your computer from the internet
 - C. keep up-to-date on virus protection
 - D. trust your service provider to protect your computer
20. Virus protection and firewalls are:
- A. foolproof and never need updating
 - B. a waste of time and money because virus attacks only happen to big businesses
 - C. effective but not necessary
 - D. a good investment, but they need to be monitored and updated regularly

How well did you do? To find out, review the answers found on the following page.

Conclusion and Implications

Digital citizenship should become a top priority for schools. Here are some questions to stimulate further discussion among administrators and teachers:

Why the Driver's License Metaphor?

The merit of the driver's license metaphor is that it implies that using technology is a privilege and not a right. There are rules to the road, and you must obey the law. Speed limits, stoplights, safety belts, etc. are part of being a good citizen on the road. The same is true for navigating with technology.

Where Should Digital Citizenship be Taught in the Curriculum?

Digital Citizenship should be taught at all levels in the K-12 curriculum and integrated in all subjects. While this 20-item digital citizenship driver's license is suitable for middle school and high school-age students, elementary age students need a digital citizenship driver's license as well.

What Areas Should the Digital Citizenship Cover?

Technology use, abuse and misuse can be categorized under nine main themes that make up digital citizenship. These include: (1) digital etiquette (2) digital communication, (3) digital education, (4) digital access, (5) digital commerce, (6) digital responsibility, (7) digital rights, (8) digital safety, and (9) digital security (self-protection). Each of these themes needs to be explored at every grade level. As sophisticated use of technology increases, so does the complexity of misuse and abuse.

When Do We Start? Now. There is considerable evidence that technology misuse and abuse is widespread and can be found inside and outside the school. In many ways, a lawless society exists. While Acceptable Use Policies (AUPs) are important, they are not enough. Students must understand what is appropriate and inappropriate and that comes through discussion and dialogue—not just following a set of rules.

How Do We Start? Make digital citizenship a priority. Everyone including administrators, board members, teachers, parents and students need to be heavily involved in the dialogue about the appropriate use of technology.

Remember, the next time that you hear a cell phone ring in a movie or wedding, ask them if they have a technology driver's license. It is never too late to learn how to use technology appropriately.

#1 - Correct answer is B. *Vibrate is correct because it is the least distracting setting during the school day. Many schools are allowing students to carry cell phones for safety and security reasons. A specialized ring tone might be able to identify your phone from others, but can be annoying to other users. Another option would be to turn off the phone during school hours.*

#2 - Correct answer is A. *The ability for PDAs to share information can lead to significant learning. But in a testing situation or times when others are talking, they should not be used this way. PDAs are appropriate for other uses at the teacher's discretion.*

#3 - Correct answer is C. *E-mail is intended for short communication. Long and involved e-mails are often either not read or filed for later review. A descriptive subject line can alert the user about importance and content in the e-mail.*

#4 - Correct answer is B. *IM can be used for allowing students to express themselves in a less threatening fashion. IM is not a place to gossip, waste time, or exclude others from being in the conversation.*

#5 - Correct answer is B. *Technology can be a helpful tool to align lessons with district, state or federal standards. Technology can assist instructors to be more efficient in their teaching.*

#6 - Correct answer is D. *Online learning, if done correctly, can be a great benefit for everyone who wants to become a "life-long learner." It does take a different way of looking at how education occurs--both teaching and learning.*

#7 - Correct answer is A. *Some students (and adults) with disabilities need assistive technologies so that they can access digital information. Everyone should have an opportunity to access information. Many of these technologies are very cost effective.*

#8 - Correct answer is C. *There is still a "digital divide" between those that have access to technologies and those that do not. Often basic technology needs go unfulfilled, even as prices decrease. As a society becomes more technologically integrated, it will become the responsibility of the school to develop a plan for addressing this need.*

#9 - Correct answer is B. *Some teachers are reluctant to assign technology-based assignments because some students might not have access (e.g., home, library). These assignments should be integrated into the classroom where students have access to technology.*

#10 - Correct answer is C. *Teenage students are becoming one of the largest groups of online consumers. There is a need to protect them and make sure they are not being exploited. The process of buying goods online needs to be taught and discussed.*

#11 - Correct answer is A. Technologies such as the Internet provide many tools to help find information. The Internet offers many opportunities to buy and sell goods, but the smart shopper looks around to find the best value. With the search tools that are available today, finding many different vendors is quick and easy.

#12 - Correct answer is B. According to copyright law, anything that is produced by an individual is copyrighted whether they have gone through the legal process or not. It may be easy to copy something and “pass off” as original work, but it still needs to be cited. Users do need to differentiate between real and fabricated information on the Internet. Much information is credible, but you can assume that it is credible without close examination.

#13 - Correct answer is C. Downloading materials without artist’s consent is stealing. Often users know that taking files from the Internet is wrong but rationalize it for a variety of reasons (e.g., high cost, availability).

#14 - Correct answer is D. If material is copyrighted, users must give credit to the person who created it. If you are going to make profit from a source, permission must be obtained. Educational users can have access to some copyrighted material, but the rules of copyright need to be thoroughly understood.

#15 - Correct answer is B. Most schools have set up Acceptable Use Policies for use of technology in school. If someone is going to use technology appropriately, they need to follow the rules that have been created.

#16 - Correct answer is C. Repetitive stress injuries are injuries that happen after extended periods of time by using technology incorrectly. There are long-term effects, but there are also short-term effects that include fatigue, eye problems, and sore muscles.

#17 - Correct answer is A. When purchasing technology, educators need to consider how that technology will be arranged for students. Furniture that is the wrong size or not made for that purpose can make it difficult for students to use the technology. It can also lead to technology related injuries such as repetitive stress, eyestrain, and sore muscles.

#18 - Correct answer is B. It can be very difficult to know who you are dealing with when using digital technology. It is easy to disguise your identity online. Be cautious about giving out personal information such as home address, phone number, etc. Do not give out information such as passwords or credit information.

#19 - Correct answer is C. Protecting one’s computer from an attack against a virus takes diligence on the part of the user. It is necessary to maintain virus protection. You should not open e-mails (and especially attachments) from people that you do not know.

#20 - Correct answer is D. Virus protection, firewalls, surge protectors, and battery backups are all appropriate tools to help protect your technology investment, but purchasing them is not enough. These tools need to be monitored and updated to ensure they are working properly.

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