



## DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP IN SCHOOLS

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### Summary

The general objective of this article is to reflect on the concept of digital citizenship in the context of Education. Specifically, we intend to investigate the main theoretical and legal aspects involving digital citizenship; how this concept can be applied in the teaching and learning process; the importance of working on it in a school environment and its possible results for the student's critical formation. The methodology applied is narrative literature review. The research is justified because it is a topic with social, political, educational and legal dimensions, because although the virtual world takes place within a screen, it is directly related to the concrete dynamics of society. It is not, therefore, an environment alien to social life, but a constituent of it, and thus, subject to rules and norms of social conduct, with which individuals need to learn to deal. The simple incorporation of technologies in the school context is not enough to provide conditions for the full exercise of digital citizenship, this presupposes the critical use of technological resources, which in turn, demands digital education, in order to enable subjects to develop technical skills and abilities, as well as critical reading of the world.

**Key words:**Digital Citizenship. Digital Education. Digital Security.

### Abstract

The general objective of this article is to reflect on the concept of digital citizenship in the context of Education. Specifically, it is intended to investigate the main theoretical and legal aspects that involve digital citizenship; how this concept can be applied in the teaching and learning process; the importance of working it in a school environment and its possible results for the student's critical education. The methodology applied is the narrative literature review. The research is justified because it is a theme with social, political, educational and legal dimensions, as although the virtual world takes place within a screen, it is directly related to the concrete dynamics of society. It is not, therefore, an environment alien to social life, but a constituent of it, and thus, subject to rules and norms of social conduct, with which individuals need to learn to deal. The simple incorporation of technologies in the school context is not enough for there to be conditions for the full exercise of digital citizenship, it presupposes the critical use of technological resources, which, in turn, demands digital education, in order to enable subjects to develop technical skills and abilities, as well as critical reading of the world.

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### 1. Introduction

In the age of digital information, we are currently thousands of people connected daily to the internet and to technological resources in general. Despite the inequalities of access between different social groups, it is certain that technology has become increasingly present in people's lives, not only as a tool for entertainment and sociability, but also in our professional relationships, commercial and business transactions. , administrative and educational, helping to solve everyday problems and enabling access to information at an intense dynamic and speed.

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On the internet, it is common for individuals to feel much more comfortable expressing political positions, different opinions, inventing characters and stories that are out of touch with reality, in short, creating a parallel imaginary world (Santos & Gontijo, 2020). However, this space, although allocated in the

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virtual environment, is a constitutive part of society, and is not a universe alien to the concrete materiality of social life.

Just as outside the digital space individuals practice their citizenship, that is, they exercise rights and fulfill duties, within it this is no different, and the adoption of inappropriate conduct on the internet is subject to rules and legal regulation. In this sense, the concept of digital citizenship has been used to refer to the appropriate use of technologies and virtual tools as a whole (Souza, 2018).

Digital citizenship is related both to issues of digital security, and the fight against virtual crimes, as well as digital education, as it presupposes technical training and critical development of digital citizens, so that they can make responsible and conscious use of technologies.

This article aims to reflect on how the concept of digital citizenship can be applied in a school context. The main methodological coordinate of this work is a narrative literature review. The simple incorporation of technologies in the school context is not enough to provide conditions for the full exercise of citizenship, this presupposes the critical apprehension of technological resources, which in turn, demands digital education, in order to enable subjects to develop skills and technical skills, as well as critical reading of the world (Belloni, 2002).

## 2 General Aspects of Digital Citizenship

In the context of the digital era, machines and technologies are not exclusively instruments for communication, but they also guide the ways of thinking, acting and behaving of human beings living in society (Souza, 2018).

The virtual environment is a space of infinite pluralities, where thousands of people from different parts of the world and different social places meet. Digital citizens can use these tools in different ways, including to commit crimes, exempting themselves from having an ethical and legal stance. The concept of digital citizenship is precisely capable of legislating on the way in which virtual space has been appropriated by its users. But, not just that.

According to Vicente et al. (2021, p. 94) “digital citizenship can be defined as a set of norms of appropriate and responsible behavior, with regard to the use of technology and effective participation in a digital and globalized context”. It has to do with the active and responsible participation of the entire digital community, democratic access to technologies, human rights and social commitment.

Digital citizenship implies, among other things, digital inclusion. And as Silva et al. remind us. (2005, p. 33), “in order to have digital inclusion, training in accessing information on the Internet is necessary”.

As highlighted by Siqueira and Nunes (2018), the concept of digital citizenship presupposes nine elements, among which we highlight digital security and digital literacy. The first refers to the set of actions that aim to guarantee security in the virtual environment. Just as in life in society we use a series of precautions to avoid being surprised by scams and accidents, in the virtual world this is no different. “These are protections against viruses, backup copies of our data and control mechanisms for our equipment” (Siqueira & Nunes, 2018, p. 133).

Digital literacy basically concerns the process of teaching and learning about technological tools and their uses. According to the definition reached by Oliveira and Giacomazzo (2017, p. 155), “it can be understood as the subject's ability to understand and use information in a critical and strategic way”.

The use of technologies is not restricted to the technical handling of digital media, it is important that the subject is able to select information, distinguishing it between true and false (Vicente et al., 2021). For Souza (2018), one of the biggest challenges is preparing children, teenagers, young people and adults to learn to analyze, verify and filter the information they have access to.

two Another problematic issue concerns “the excess of information that can be accessed, and how much of this information is actually absorbed” (Souza, 2018, p. 62). In the digital age, information reaches us very quickly, promptly and in vast quantities, however, it is necessary to know how to filter it, and not only that, it is also important to transform it into knowledge (Oliveira & Giacomazzo, 2017).

This requires much more than a simple raw reading of the content, but the construction of tools, theoretical accumulation, research and pedagogical guidance. Along this path, digital education emerges as a space for intentional learning capable of enabling this mediation between information and knowledge.

### 3 Digital Citizenship in the Context of Education

Digital education, digital literacy and information education are some of the terms used to characterize the relationship between education, citizenship and digital inclusion. In this sense, digital education does not just refer to the act of teaching individuals how to handle computer programs, use electronic devices, assimilate technical functions or decode data. It goes much further, in the sense of “creating lifelong learners, people capable of finding, evaluating and using information effectively to solve problems or make decisions”. (Silva et al., 2005, p. 33).

A digital education favorable to the process of construction of knowledge by the individual is one that creates the right conditions for the individual to develop the ability to perceive information and go beyond it on its surface to reach the meanings it takes on in contact with concrete reality. In the words of Souza (2018, p. 65):

Digital education, like classical education, plays a fundamental role in the formation and development of the digital individual as a whole. It is the function of digital education to form a digital citizen capable of acting with ethics and respect for their fellow human beings, who can overcome the seduction of intolerance that is disseminated in the virtual world, who can navigate knowing that they are the same person both in the digital world and in the physical world.

In this context, the school, as a socio-historical-cultural institution, emerges as a space that can enable the construction of a culture of safe use of digital media, as discussed by Marinho et al. (2019). According to these authors, the school has the role of clarifying and guiding students, however, they also warn of the challenges:

Schools, a reference institution for developing the coexistence of individuals and citizenship training, often need to overcome almost insurmountable obstacles to guarantee access and digital training for their students. Within this digital formation, security presents itself as a major challenge, both for schools and families, due to the vastness of connection opportunities, once access is established (Marinho et al., 2019, p. 811).

It is not only the lack of specialized training in technology and information that harms young people in their relationship with the virtual environment, but above all, the lack of political training. Connected, they carry their own conceptions into the digital space and are guided by certain worldviews.

Therefore, in line with Oliveira and Giacomazzo (2017, p. 170), it is understood that digital citizenship in a school context requires creating for subjects “conditions for making judgments (questioning, arguing, meaning) and verifying the veracity of information, thus critically constructing their point of view, thinking about the implications for their daily lives and life in society”.

### 5 Final Considerations

The mass propagation of technological resources is a very recent phenomenon in our society. As access becomes more widespread, it also becomes increasingly necessary for individuals to acquire prior knowledge to properly handle digital platforms and the virtual environment as a whole. Given the infinity of alternatives and possibilities offered by technologies, it is necessary to develop technical skills and competencies, but also to mature critical sense and the ability to read reality. The full exercise of digital citizenship, therefore, implies digital education

critical, a task that constitutes a challenge for schools, whether due to their outdated infrastructure, lack of continued training or even the traditionalism that still persists in the Brazilian educational system.

Along this path, it is concluded that the role of the school is not only to develop IT techniques and technologies, but to create favorable conditions for students to critically reflect on the use of these resources, based on the analytical tools available to them in the learning context.

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