

Digital Citizenship Trends in Higher Education

Alicia F. Davis

Department of Education, Sul Ross State University

ED 6376 Ed Tech Capstone

Dr. Jennifer Miller-Ray

1/20/2024

Digital Citizenship Trends in Higher Education

Abstract

This paper examines trends in higher education's use of digital citizenship. We examine trends in behavior, values, social presence, digital divides, participation, and innovation related to digital citizenship in higher education in this conversation. Student groups from a private institution, a medium-sized university in the Midwest of the United States, and a college in China were examined. Men and women from diverse ethnic backgrounds, undergraduate and graduate students, as well as students from both urban and rural locations and different socioeconomic backgrounds, were all participants. The Digital Citizenship Scale and Cronbach's alpha were mostly employed in the studies to evaluate the data's dependability. The purpose of this investigation is to gain an understanding of the level of digital citizenship possessed by college students and to chart a course for the investigation of additional groups of participants who do not fall into the groups that were researched.

Keywords: College students, behavior, digital citizenship, , higher education, learning outcomes, socioeconomic

Introduction

Citizenship in the digital realm can imply something quite different to each individual (Manzuoli et al., 219). The term "digital citizenship" was first coined by Ribble (2015), who defined it as "the rules of proper and responsible behavior with relation to the use of technology." The nine components of digital citizenship were broken down by Ribble and Miller (2013) into three categories. Respect Yourself/Respect Others (RY/RO), Educate Yourself/Connecting with Others (EY/CO), and Protect Yourself/Protect Others (PY/PO) are the three dimensions that

were created to organize the nine different aspects of digital citizenship. Ribble and Miller (2013) emphasize the need for responsible, safe, and ethical use of technology in education.

Digital citizenship has become a hot topic because so many people use communication and information technologies. Research on the topic frequently focuses on teachers or K–12 students (Kara, 2017). Because this literature review is meant to raise awareness of digital citizenship in higher education and because online courses are here to stay and will continue to expand, it is obvious that enhancing digital citizenship in higher education is an area worth researching.

Literature Review

The research by Dunaway and Macharia (2020), which looked at 184 college students, found that the relationship between digital citizenship and cyberbullying behaviors is affected by how students think they will do in school. The researchers also found that teaching students about digital citizenship behaviors in school could help lessen the effects of bad online behavior on students' learning outcomes. But the study has some flaws, like a small sample size, limited use, not being able to find causal links, different response pathways, and the need for more research on bigger and more varied groups of people. The results might not work in other school systems.

The next study looked at whether there are statistically significant differences in how college students think about digital behavior based on their age, gender, how much time they spend online, and how good they are at using computers. According to Singh et al. (2021), kids should learn good digital citizenship habits and skills early on. Also, they found big differences in how college students thought about digital citizenship based on their age, gender, how much

time they spent online, and how good they were at computers. This showed that college teachers need to encourage students to behave digitally. However, the study only looked at college students in a certain area and used self-reported data, which could be biased. It also didn't look into other factors that might have affected the results, like cultural background or socioeconomic class.

In their 2017 study, Xu et al. looked into how college students' digital citizenship behaviors change depending on where they come from in terms of income, and they also looked into whether this difference adds to a second-level digital gap. The Digital Citizenship Scale was given to 712 college students in central China and was used to gather information. The study found that students from areas with higher socioeconomic status behaved more appropriately when it came to digital citizenship than students from areas with lower socioeconomic status did, even though they used computers at the same rate. The findings also showed that there was a second-level digital divide. The results are consistent with Hargittai's (2002) proposed "second-level divide," which argues that as more individuals use computers and the Internet, the focus of the digital divide problem has changed from access to disparities in technology usage.

A study by Elcicek et al. (2018) asked 143 graduate students from Karadeniz Technical University's distance education master classes (50 women and 93 men) about their experiences. SPSS 22.0 was used to look at the data that was gathered with the Individual Information Form, the Social Presence Scale, and the Digital Citizenship Scale. It was found by Elcicek et al. (2018) that graduate students in master's programs offered through distance education had high levels of digital citizenship and social presence. This shows how important it is for students to know their responsibilities and use technology in a moral way. Other problems with the study are that it doesn't compare to other studies, there isn't enough research on the topic, and the sample size is

too small—only graduate students. This means that bigger groups of people with different levels of education should be used in future studies.

Kara (2017) discovered that students at private colleges are very good at networking, critical thinking, technical prowess, knowing a lot about the world and living in it, and being able to use technology well. However, they are less politically active on the internet for a variety of reasons, such as emotional distress, societal expectations, fear of bad outcomes, and a desire to avoid facing the quantitative facts in a more comprehensive way. Due to the small sample size and the fact that it was only done on one university sample, this study does not look into differences across academic fields or ethnic groups.

Conclusion

This research study on the topic of digital citizenship among college students is crucial since it sheds light on the beliefs, behaviors, involvement, and digital divisions among various groups. In discussions on how to best teach students to be responsible digital citizens, higher education is often overlooked. These studies will serve as a foundation for future research on trends in higher education related to digital citizenship by providing a benchmark of digital competence among college students. It can also be used as a resource for instructors teaching courses on digital citizenship in higher education.

The Pandemic of 2020 brought to light differences in socioeconomic status and patterns of behavior among various groups of people. How do undergrad students, age 18 and up, who attend schools designated as Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI) do in terms of emerging aspects of digital citizenship, such as conduct, participation, and innovation?

References

- Dunaway, M., & Macharia, M. (2020, November 30). *The effect of digital citizenship on negative online behaviors and learning outcomes in higher education*. *Journal of Information Systems Education*. Retrieved November 20, 2022, from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1323723>
- Elcicek, M., Erdemci, H., & Karal, H. (2018). Examining the relationship between the levels of digital citizenship and social presence for the graduate students having online education. *Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education*, 19(1), 203–214. <https://doi.org/10.17718/tojde.382801>
- Hargittai, E. (2002). Second-level digital divide: Differences in people's online skills. *First Monday*, 7(4). <https://doi.org/10.5210/fm.v7i4.942>
- Kara, N. (2017, November 30). *Understanding University Students' thoughts and practices about digital citizenship: A mixed methods study*. *Educational Technology & Society*. Retrieved November 19, 2022, from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1165955>
- Manzuoli, C. H., Sánchez, A. V., & Bedoya, E. D. (219AD). Digital Citizenship: A Theoretical Review of the Concept and Trends. *TOJET: The Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology*, 18(2), 10–18
- Ribble, M., & Miller, T. N. (2013). Educational leadership in an online world: Connecting students to technology responsibly, safely, and ethically. *Online Learning*, 17(1). <https://doi.org/10.24059/olj.v17i1.310>

Ribble, M. (2015). *Digital citizenship in schools: Nine elements all students should know*.
International Society for Technology in Education.

Singh, A., Bharti, A., Rathore, A., & Sinha, N. (2021). Digital Citizenship Behaviour and Online Engagement fostering Creativity among Students of Higher Education. *Explore-Journal of Research, XIII*, 277–282.

Xu, S., Yang, H. H., Zhu, S., & MacLeod, J. (2017). Understanding the digital citizenship behaviors of college students from differing socioeconomic origins. *2017 International Symposium on Educational Technology (ISET)*. <https://doi.org/10.1109/iset.2017.50>