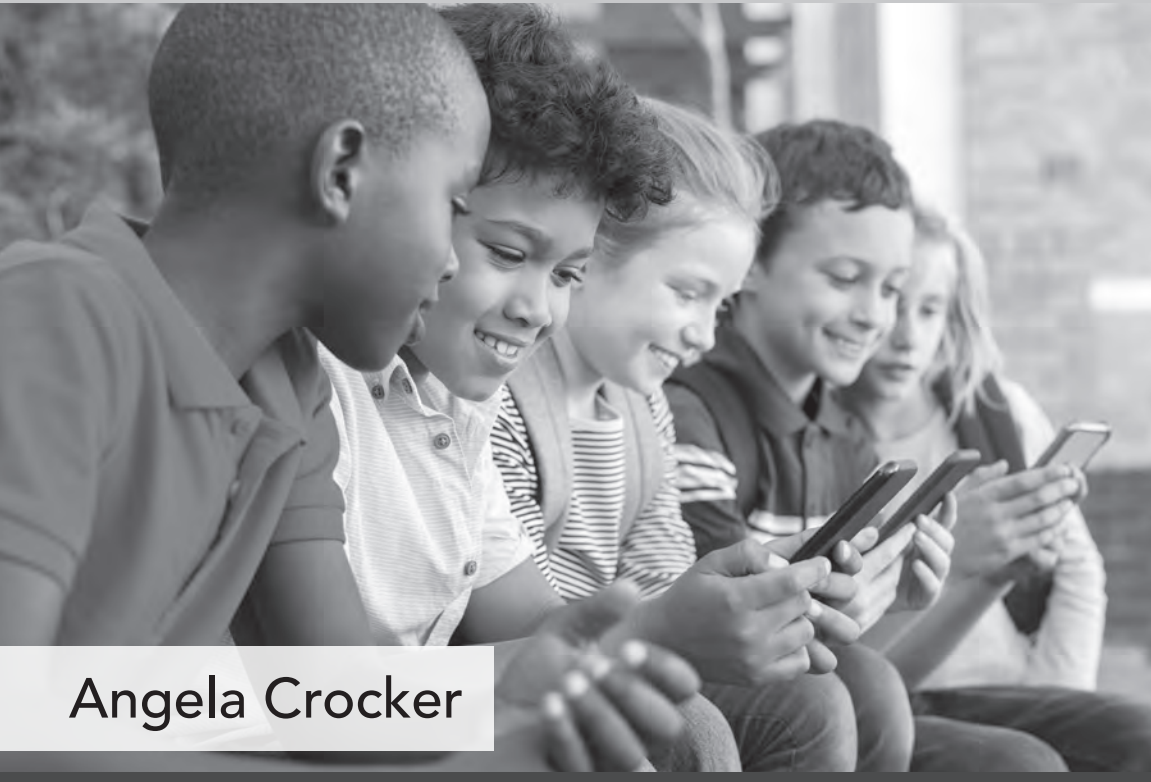
Digital Life Skills for Youth

A Guide for Parents, Guardians, and Educators



Angela Crocker

Self-Counsel Press
(a division of)
International Self-Counsel Press Ltd.
Canada USA

Copyright©2019 by International Self-Counsel Press Ltd.

All rights reserved.

No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form by any means — graphic, electronic, or mechanical — without permission in writing from the publisher, except by a reviewer who may quote brief passages in a review. Any request for photocopying, scanning, or information storage and retrieval systems of any part of this book shall be directed to Access Copyright, the Canadian Copyright Licensing Agency. To make a transactional permission request please use the online Title Search & Permissions tool found at www.accesscopyright.ca.

Self-Counsel Press acknowledges the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Canada Book Fund (CBF) for our publishing activities. Canada

Printed in Canada.

First edition: 2019

Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication

Title: Digital life skills for youth : a guide for parents, guardians, and educators / Angela Crocker.

Names: Crocker, Angela, author.

Series: Self-Counsel reference series.

Description: Series statement: Reference series

Identifiers: Canadiana (print) 20190148861 | Canadiana (ebook) 20190148896 | ISBN 9781770403147 (softcover) | ISBN 9781770405042 (EPUB) | ISBN 9781770405059 (Kindle)

Subjects: LCSH: Internet and children. | LCSH: Computers and children. | LCSH: Computer literacy. | LCSH: Internet literacy. | LCSH: Information society.

Classification: LCC QA76.9.C64 C76 2019 | DDC 004—dc23

Self-Counsel Press
(a division of)
International Self-Counsel Press Ltd.

North Vancouver, BC
Canada

Bellingham, WA
USA

Contents

Introduction xv

1. Guidance for Parents xviii
2. Support for Teachers xxi
3. Schools and Communities Working Together xxvi

1 Digital Citizenship 1

1. Acceptable Behavior 3
2. Access to Technology 8
3. Tricky Tactics 10
4. Self-regulation 13
5. Screen Time 15
6. Digital Privilege Contracts 23

2 Mental Wellness 33

1. Understand the Source 34
2. Recognize the (Hidden) Signs 35
3. Know Where to Find Help 37
4. What Else Can Be Done? 40

3 Core Skills 45
1. Reputation Management 46
2. Time Management 49
3. Privacy 51
4. Navigation 52
5. Communication 52
6. Finances 55
7. Streaming 58
8. Around the House 61
9. Physical Fitness 63

4 Social Skills 65
1. Setting up Accounts 66
2. Passwords 67
3. Family Relationships 70
4. Being a Good Friend 71
5. School, Parties, and Social Events 72
6. Notifications and Distractions 73
7. Gaming 75
8. Influence and Influencers 77
9. Content Creation and Curation 78
10. Social Media 79
10.1 Snapchat 82
10.2 Instagram 83
10.3 YouTube 84
10.4 TikTok 85
10.5 Facebook 85

5 Study Skills 87
1. Learning Experiences 88
2. Reading and Writing 88
3. School Communication 91
4. Note Taking 94

5. Web Research 95
6. Identifying Fake News and Bias 98
7. Productivity and Organization 101
8. Creativity 103

6 Safety Skills 105

1. Digital Responsibility 106
2. Community Alerts 107
3. Identity Theft 108
4. Navigating Nudity 110
5. Online Safety 113
6. Cyberbullying 113
7. Legal Obligations 115

Conclusion 117

Download Kit 119

Samples

1 Digital Qualities Worksheet xxii
2 Digital Teaching Worksheet xxvii
3 Digital Life Skills Master Checklist 4
4 Screen Time Tracker 17
5 Digital Privilege Contract: Internet Use 25
6 Digital Privilege Contract: Mobile Phone Use 27
7 Digital Privilege Contract: Classroom 31
8 Recognizing Mental Health Stress 38
9 The 3Ps 47
10 Contacts to Memorize 54
11 Online Account Inventory 69

Notice to Readers

Laws are constantly changing. Every effort is made to keep this publication as current as possible. However, the author, the publisher, and the vendor of this book make no representations or warranties regarding the outcome or the use to which the information in this book is put and are not assuming any liability for any claims, losses, or damages arising out of the use of this book. The reader should not rely on the author or the publisher of this book for any professional advice. Please be sure that you have the most recent edition.

Dedication

For Sean, an emerging digital citizen, who inspires me every day.

Acknowledgments

With special thanks to my husband, Paul. We are different kinds of geek but we are a dynamic duo when it comes to digital parenting.

Deep appreciation to Dear Ol' Dad, Brian, who introduced my brother and me to computers at an early age. And to my treasured brother, Michael, with whom I argued over the controls of our TI99/4A, Commodore 64, and other home computers.

Thanks also to the awesome youth who call me Auntie Angela. Their questions and behaviors around digital things inspired me to make this book the best it could be. I'm talking about you: Owen, Alana, Pippa, Alexander, Caroline, Grace, Ella, Elizabeth, Mitch, Kaly, DeeDee, Connor, Braydon, Nate, Cormac, Nathan, Ray, Mallory, plus others who prefer to not be named.

Many parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, guardians, and others offered ideas, shared concerns, flagged real-world issues, and graciously shared their families' solutions to digital (and analog) problems. In particular, I'd like to thank Felice Bisby, Joyelle Brandt, Moira Bridgman, Sam Brulotte, Rebecca Coleman, Valerie Crocker, Kimmy Dean, Megan Fox, Angela Hemingway-Adam, Chef Nathan Hyam, Faye Luxemburg-Hyam, Vicki McLeod, Vandhana Misri, Sean Moffitt, Shelley Neill, Kim Plumley, Peggy Richardson, Sean Smith, Janeen Hynd Tronnes, and Eileen Velthuis.

My Master of Education cohort at Simon Fraser University was extraordinary. Together we embraced the issues and opportunities for education technology and learning design (ETLD) with passionate debate and supportive problem solving. I am honored to call Mark Biggar, Trevor Cheng, Todd Goodman, Ryan Hong, Jeff Lynch, Jessica Matthews, Stu Mitchell, Lukas Morel, Trevor Rosencrans, and Kim Sandhu both friends and colleagues. And an extra thank you to the ETLD professors I studied with: Kevin O'Neill, Engida Gebre, John Nesbit, Paula MacDowell, and Allan MacKinnon. Their expertise, research, and encouragement have made me a better teacher.

I also want to express my deep appreciation to the teachers who shared their thoughts, expressed concerns and frustrations, and demonstrated time and again their commitment to supporting the next generation of digital citizens.

Introduction

You live in a digital world. We all do. Every adult has to navigate technology and data daily. Even if you've eschewed technology in favor of an analog life, you'll still use technology to pay for your groceries, call your best friend, buy a transit fare, and fill your prescriptions.

Children and teens growing up today must prepare to function in that digital world. The digital skills they need will partly be day-to-day, practical skills such as shopping online, questioning fake news, and connecting with friends through social media. They will also need digital skills to be part of the future workforce. Increasingly, all jobs require some degree of computer skills and digital communication savvy. Artists sell their creations through online shops. Fishermen (and women) must weigh, inventory, and certify their catch for commercial sale. Myriad jobs in agriculture and manufacturing, service industries, retail sales, and office jobs all require digital skills.

To learn digital skills, children and teens need to see technology in use and have opportunities to try it out firsthand. This happens through observation of modeled behaviors and step-by-step demonstrations of specific skills from both peers and adults. And youth are not afraid to jump in and figure how to use a device through trial and error. Your four year old probably already knows how to navigate apps on your iPad and your teen can communicate through private messaging on Snapchat at lightning speed.

As parents and teachers, it's our responsibility to nurture digital citizens who can, eventually, be fully functioning adults with the problem-solving skills and confidence to tackle any technical situation. Youth learn to research instructions on pretty much anything they need to know "how to." And they learn when to call for help from peers, parents, or teachers if their online search doesn't provide the answer they're looking for. Critical thinking, problem solving, and confidence building are key goals of schools today. Similarly, youth are learning social skills, self-regulation, and responsibility at home. In the best cases, lessons at school echo lessons at home and vice versa. Wherever digital skills are needed, parents and teachers have to take responsibility for raising the next generation of digital citizens.

As a parent or teacher, you may be daunted by this responsibility. Digital information from social media to professional data sets and technology like laptops and mobile phones are constantly changing at a rapid pace. It can be hard to keep up for your own needs, let alone figure out what issues might be impacting youth in your life.

Add to that some terrifying headlines and school presentations that focus on the negative aspects of the internet. Cyberbullying, child pornography, and luring fuel many parents' nightmares. Happily, a longitudinal study conducted at the University of Calgary discovered that these risks seem to be decreasing. CBC News' Ramona Pringle reported, "Having summarized data about over 50,000 youth aged 9 to 17 from existing studies released between 1990 and 2016, the researchers found that, on average, one in five youth have seen unwanted sexual material online and one in nine have received online solicitations.

"But while those numbers are disturbing, the risks have actually decreased. In other words, we're getting better at keeping kids safe online." ("How much online porn do children see unintentionally? Less of it than 5 years ago," *CBC News*, July 4, 2018).

It's important to acknowledge that these are serious issues that must be addressed. But, I argue, an increasing number of families and schools are trying to help kids figure out the basics and best practices in their digital lives. In this book, you'll read lots about the issues and strategies to help you tackle them. You'll also read about the worrying headline topics and find related resources for help, but this book puts emphasis on preventative and practical digital life skills that parents and teachers can help foster in youth today.

Often, parents hear the message that we should keep our kids offline or off screens or off the computer. But this isn't a practical way to protect our children from the perils of technology and the internet. Instead, we've got to teach them how to live with technology. Only with guidance can they develop healthy digital life skills. And they're going to need the freedom to make mistakes and learn from them. Parents can rest easier if they know those mistakes are being made with parental and school supports that reinforce what could have been done differently for a better outcome.

Teachers welcome parents' support in the goal of fostering healthy digital life skills. Lessons at home support lessons at school. Neither parents nor teachers can fully inform and inspire children and teens to be model digital citizens. It's too big a task for any one adult. As Hillary Rodham Clinton said, "It takes a village."

Today's youth have access to more technology and information than any previous generation. And when we talk about youth in this book, we're talking about children and teenagers aged 11 to 18, not their younger siblings who need different supports to navigate technology and the internet. This book focuses on the tween and teenager years. The advice herein is for those guiding that transition from childhood to adulthood; the formative years when boundaries are tested, lessons are learned, new experiences are attempted, and, eventually, adult-level skills are mastered.

Youth need age-appropriate guidance to help them navigate the internet, online communication, digital file management, and more. Ideally, that guidance comes from knowledgeable parents and teachers but not every adult knows what guidance to offer. In some cases, teachers are tech savvy and can teach curriculums filled with digital media, data technology, and online communities. Similarly, some parents are digitally savvy and can offer guidance to help their child live a rich and rewarding digital life. However, there are many parents and teachers who have limited or incomplete knowledge to pass along.

Youth and digital is a big topic, one that both parents and educators want to get right. Yet, we're bombarded by headlines that offer biased or incomplete views of research on the subject. In my view, you're all trying to do the best you can just as I am in my role as Mom. Know that I'm in the trenches with you learning what works for my family on a day-to-day basis. And some days are better than others for all of us.

As an aside, my own experiences with computer technology began when I was about ten years old. My parents, especially my father, were willing and able to provide my brother and me with a home computer starting with the TI-99/4A and later Interact, Commodore 64, and Tandy 1000 TRS-80 home computers. Happily, the laptop I'm using to write this book is faster, lighter, and more portable than any of those predecessors. Growing up, we used the computers to play games (my favorite was *Hunt the Wumpus*) and write school essays while constantly honing our negotiation skills as my brother and I took turns at the keyboard. This early exposure piqued my academic and professional interests in technology and digital communication. As I've lived with technology since the early 1980s, I have a fairly unusual user experience as I reflect on my own years as youth and contrast them to my current years as parent and teacher.

This book is for those parents and teachers seeking help. *Digital Life Skills for Youth* is for anyone who wants to be a positive guiding influence on the next generation of digital citizens. General concepts such as digital citizenship and reputation management are discussed. Also included are core skills areas where youth need to develop competencies in order to function in today's job market. Your child or teen needs age-appropriate core skills, social skills, study skills, and safety skills to thrive in their digital life. This book provides relevant information and resources to help you nurture digitally savvy youth.

My research for this book offers insight into many of the issues and hopes to share welcome, sensible, research-based, real-world guidance that can be put into action for most families and classrooms. It's not a prescriptive, one-size-fits-all solution. Rather, you'll read a range of solutions that can be adapted depending on your youth's unique interests, skills, and maturity, moderated by your family and community values. And I've interspersed information about mental health issues such as anxiety and depression to reinforce the need to pay attention to youth mental wellness.

1. Guidance for Parents

Parents have a lot to teach their kids on the journey from infant to adult. There are the basics of hygiene, eating well, physical activity, and sleep. Add to that more complex lessons in interpersonal relations, politics, personal responsibility, and self-regulation, to name just a few. Being a parent is a huge job and digital life skills are an added layer in many aspects of growing up. How to proceed is a personal decision.

Anecdotally, parents fall in three broad categories when it comes to kids and technology. There are parents who restrict digital completely; parents who allow a digital free for all; and, mostly, parents who know some guidance and modeling are necessary to raise digitally aware children into fully functional digital citizens. An awareness of that need isn't enough. Parents require digital skills themselves to be able to model best behaviors, set limits, and provide an environment where digital curiosity is okay and mistakes are tolerated as teachable moments.

"I'm intent on introducing my kids to experiences that begin to prepare them now and make them capable today. I think it's important that they have to learn by trial and error while we are nearby, so they can learn for themselves what they are made of." wrote Chip Gaines in the Fall 2018 edition of *The Magnolia Journal*. While Mr. Gaines is talking about introducing his five children to tools and tasks on the construction job sites that fill his workdays, I argue his statement is equally valid for digital skills. We've got to introduce, coach, mentor, and monitor youth as they find their way online. Over several years, they gain the skills they need.

Teaching digital life skills is a further extension of parenting overall. It's not a special type of parenting that requires a different approach than all your other efforts to raise your kids. Yes, the technology may be new to you and your kids but you're still raising wonderful human beings along the way. As Robyn Wilder writes in her article about Philippa Perry, a British psychotherapist, author, and journalist, "Perry's book posits gently but firmly that being a parent isn't a chore, duty, or something to be 'hacked' at all, but a relationship to invest in and nurture — and one that will pay dividends in the long term." ("Philippa Perry: 'Listen carefully, parents — and don't despair'," *The Guardian*, March 10, 2019). I argue the digital life skills you develop in yourself and your kids will help nurture your relationship for a lifetime.

In my personal journey as a parent, the parenting expert I turn to more than any other is Ann Douglas. Her latest book, *Happy Parents, Happy Kids*, (HarperCollins, 2019), offers detailed research and leadership when it comes to the positive impacts of a happy family, one that nurtures and supports both parents and kids over a lifetime. She writes, "The future needs your kid: a happy, healthy adult who is capable of navigating life's challenges and seizes upon ... opportunities that we can't even begin to imagine today." Ann's words echo my own reasons for writing this book. We are raising the next generation of digital citizens and they are

going to need to know how to navigate the digital life. So, let's show them the way in a safe and nurtured environment, as best we can. And preserve the serenity of family life, as much as we can, along the way.

My practical approach to technology in family life is supported by research. As Anya Kamenetz wrote in the *Columbia Journalism Review* (November 5, 2018), "there's existing research on parental attitudes and successful parenting strategies regarding digital media. You can help your kids learn via digital media, experts say, and use it constructively. You can help manage and moderate their use." Further, Jordan Shapiro wrote, "Your job as a parent is not to stop unfamiliar tools from disrupting your nostalgic image of the ideal childhood ... Instead, it's to prepare your kids to live in an ethical, meaningful and fulfilled life in an ever-changing world, " (*The New Childhood: Raising Kids to Thrive in a Connected World*, Little Brown, Spark, 2018).

That said, when I advocate for youth to have access to technology and learn to use it well, I temper that recommendation with a strong caution about the potential impacts on youth's mental health. As Jingjing Jiang wrote for the Pew Research Centre "The ubiquity of social media and cellphones and other devices in teens' lives has fueled heated discussions over the effects of excessive screen time and parents' role in limiting teens' screen exposure. In recent months, many major technology companies, including Google and Apple, have announced new products aimed at helping adults and teens monitor and manage their online usage." (www.pewinternet.org/2018/08/22/how-teens-and-parents-navigate-screen-time-and-device-distractions/, accessed August 22, 2018). Too much screen time is detrimental for users of any age. Part of the lesson parents and teachers must impart is how and when to unplug, and how to recognize and counteract the ill effects of too much technology.

This book is an opportunity to fine tune your parent radar. You'll learn about digital issues and technological considerations and then decide how to apply them in your family. You'll also learn things such as texting abbreviations and the sexual interpretations of emojis (see the back of this book or use the downloadable kit; instructions for access at back of book) to help you decipher and understand youth's online communication. The age of your children, their maturity, your family's financial position, and more will influence how you introduce and moderate technology use. It's a personal decision and this book is designed to present the options based on best practices and research. This book is not a one-size-fits-all prescription for every family.

Instead, you'll discover a range of approaches that can be personalized to suit your situation.

To help you figure out your approach to digital life skills, use the Digital Qualities Worksheet (see Sample 1) to think about what's important to you and the ways that your family operates. By understanding your approach, you'll be able to decide how to approach the digital skills in this book with your kids in a way that suits your family. All of the worksheets used in this book are available on the download kit for you to print off or type in, as you need. Again, see the back of the book for instructions on how to use the download kit.

Parents today are on a pioneer expedition. We're figuring out parenting issues influenced by technology in real time. As a parent, you are the expert on your child. By reading this book, you'll prepare yourself to guide youth in your care wherever their journey takes you. I'm on that journey with you as Mom to my amazing son, a child who has had an internet use contract, updated annually, since he was four years old. This year we'll write the tenth edition of that contract to reflect his age-appropriate use of social media and a mobile phone. I'll tell you more about internet use contracts in a later chapter. It's just one of many tools in this book your family might adopt in your digital journey.

Let's work together to raise a digitally aware next generation of digital citizens.

2. Support for Teachers

I've written this book with both parents and teachers in mind. I have tremendous respect for today's teachers. You may be one of those teachers faced with the daunting task of classroom management with the distractions of personal electronic devices, in addition to playground politics or teen angst. You may also be taking on new curriculums that reflect the broader influence of technology today. After all, school is designed to prepare students for their future careers.

Many teachers are now being asked to teach digital literacy and digital citizenship. Some schools integrate the lessons into familiar subjects like social studies or language arts. Other schools are adding new courses focused on digital life. And a lot of schools are blending these two approaches. Often, technology decisions are made based on budgets, fundraising, donors' directed gifts, or grants. And some schools have while others have not.

Sample 1
Digital Qualities Worksheet

Date: February 21st	
Use this worksheet to explore and record the digital qualities that matter to you and your family. Whether at home or out in the community, think about the values, conventions, and exceptions that are important for youth to master as they learn digital life skills.	
Number of youth: 2	
Age(s) of youth: Laura (15), Eddie (13)	
What, if any, unique conditions apply to your family? (e.g., youth who is hearing impaired; youth who is gifted, etc.)	Laura struggles to self-regulate screen time.
What is your personal comfort level with technology? Do you love it or hate it? Do you find technology intuitive or do you struggle to master it? Are you willing to use it in your family?	Willing to use it. Intuitive to use.
What is your financial situation? What can you afford in terms of technology purchases, internet service, and mobile phone plans?	To save costs, my kids' mobile phone have no data. They can use Wi-Fi.
What technology is currently available in your home? Are these shared devices or does each family member have their own? What, if any, technology would you like to add?	Laura has her own laptop. Eddie uses a shared computer. Both have mobile phones.
In terms of technology use, describe the maturity, ability, interest, and potential for each youth in your household to thrive with technology.	Laura does OK if she focuses on her work. She is easily distracted by social media. Eddie works well with technology in our home.

Sample 1 – Continued

How will you monitor youth for mental wellness? What atypical behaviors must be exhibited for you to intervene? What resources are available in your area if youth need professional support?	I will make one-on-one time with each of my kids a daily priority. If a crisis emerges, I will call 911 or the nurseline or text CONNECT-TO-686868
What is your approach to screen time? Are you setting strict time limits or making screens available based on other criteria (e.g. sleep, chores, fitness, social)? Do you allow more screen time to accommodate a heavy homework load or to support a youth pursuing interactive or creative pursuits online?	I set fairly strict time limits with exceptions for extra schoolwork and to pass the time on travel days.
Do your family rules about technology change in special circumstances? What if an elder is in hospital or your family takes a vacation?	See above.
What are your youth's school requirements for technology? Must they bring a personal laptop to class?	Laura must bring a laptop to class. Sometimes Eddie takes his cell phone to school.
What are school policies about technology? Do they align with your family's approach? If not, note the differences.	School doesn't allow mobile phone use during class time.
Additional notes	

The addition of lessons in digital skills has been a challenge. Teachers are highly trained in numerous subject areas. While they participate in ongoing professional development, they may not have ready access to in-depth training on digital issues and technology. And they may not want to invest time and money to return to university or college for further training.

Remember that, in learning design, technology isn't always something that requires electricity. Paper and pencil are technology. Chairs and tables are technology. A chair and carpet for story circle are technology. And, depending on the lesson, a single computer with projector and screen are all the technology needed. Or, perhaps, your lesson requires each student to have a personal electronic device be that a mobile phone, tablet, or laptop. While this book focuses on things like mobile phone etiquette, computer office skills, and social media savvy, it's important to remember that classrooms don't have to rely on devices all the time.

Yet, reasonably, parents, teachers, and industry want school to prepare students for their future roles in the workforce. Business advisor Chris Brogan expressed this well when he wrote, "With all the shifts in technology, why aren't we prepping people to learn how to interact, how to query, how to do all that will be required to link together and interpret and sift through all this information? " ("It's Time to Rethink What People Need to Learn," ChrisBrogan.com, accessed May, 2019.) Which highlights that learning to use today's technology isn't the full goal. Rather, we want to raise digital citizens who can take what they learn today and expand it to include the things they'll need to know in the future.

Add to that, many teachers have been advised for a decade or more by their employer or union to avoid using social media. As such, they have limited or no experience with these tools. In some cases, long service teachers demonstrate reluctance to take on new approaches and topics. There are further challenges when a school has raised money for a class set of iPads or a computer classroom. These devices need regular updates and inevitably a class set will include a few non-functional units on any given day turning teacher into tech support. In

combination, these conditions can make it challenging for the willing teacher to champion digital in their school.

Those teachers that add digital must do so amidst the complex mix of academic, social, and emotional realities of their school communities. In many school districts, digital is considered an add-on subject. Instead, I suggest you frame it as an integrated element in existing lessons. For example, teachers might add heart-rate monitors to physical education class. Similarly, a shop teacher might use a computer-based drafting program. Math classes might use videos to explain concepts. (See Khan Academy for examples.) Language arts classes might use word processing and presentation software. This book presents a variety of the issues and lessons that must be imparted to future digital citizens. Teachers should feel free to adopt or extrapolate the elements that work for their curriculum and school communities.

To help teachers understand and share the approach to digital skills they want to see in their classroom or school community, there is a Digital Teaching Worksheet, seen in Sample 2 and available on the download kit. Use this worksheet to think about how much digital you'll include in your lessons, what your school or school district rules are about students with personal devices, and more. By understanding your desires, you'll be able to decide how to approach the digital skills in this book with your students in the context of your school or district regulations.

And while we're talking about social and emotional realities, let's pause to acknowledge that technology impacts the mental wellness of both teachers and students. Battles over screen time, discipline for unauthorized technology use, negative impacts of unmonitored social media at home, and much more all impact the classroom environment. That collective frustration, anxiety, loneliness, and other negative emotions can be a lot for a teacher to manage both for themselves personally, and for the students they teach.

I'm empathetic to the work that elementary, middle, and high school teachers undertake. While I teach at the postsecondary level, my academic background includes a Master of Education degree from Simon Fraser University, class of 2018. My cohort focused on education technology and learning design (ETLD). Conversations with my classmates, mostly elementary and high school teachers, were an inspiration for this book. And the research and study I participated in have informed my thoughts to support teachers teaching digital life

skills to youth. Plus, as an aside, my mum was a teacher for more than three decades, who worked in elementary schools throughout her career. Teacher career politics, school district administration issues, and technology challenges were frequent topics of conversation at our family dinners.

3. Schools and Communities Working Together

Parents, teachers, and others who influence children and teens throughout the growing up years, have to work together to educate and inspire youth emerging as digital citizens. In order to pass on any digital knowledge, you need to understand it yourself. It takes a complex set of skills, social customs, and security considerations. And keeping up to date on the latest options and best practices makes it even more complicated. With this book, you'll expand your knowledge and be better prepared to guide the youth in your home or at your school.

Part of the challenge for teachers and parents is knowing what kids will learn at home and what they will learn at school. There's no obvious divide like there is between toilet training at home and algebra lessons at school. Parents and teachers are regularly on the frontlines with children and teens. Working together as a community, you can establish and normalize social conventions around the use of technology and digital skills by modeling best behavior and setting the tone for what's acceptable.

Community standards can also respect that every family will have its own approach, just as every school will create digital rules that work for the circumstances of each school community. It's essential that we respect differences from the digitally disconnected to the hyperconnected and everything in between. The overarching goal is to help youth gain new digital life skills, at the right pace and with purpose.

Add to this a requirement to find ways for youth with diverse needs to access technology and the internet in ways that support them. This varies based on maturity and experience. Each child, each teen grows and evolves at different pace for different developmental markers; moral reasoning, socialization, impulse control, and more. In addition, designations such as gifted, autistic, learning disabled, dyslexic, or other exceptional labels must be considered to acknowledge and adjust for neurodiversity. This impacts how and when kids are ready for each

Sample 2
Digital Teaching Worksheet

Date: March 22nd	
Use this worksheet to explore and record the digital qualities that matter in your classroom. Use it as a guide to help you design lessons and learning activities that support youth learning to master digital life skills.	
Grade level(s): 8	
Class size: 29 students (6 with IEP)	
What is your personal comfort level with technology? Do you love it or hate it? Do you find technology intuitive or do you struggle to master it? Are you willing to use it in your lessons?	Happy to use it but frustrated when it takes away for lesson time.
What is the school's policy regarding technology in the classroom? Do you have autonomy to make different rules apply to your students while they are in your classroom?	No tech from first bell to last bell unless teacher permits in class use as part of the lesson.
What technology resources are available in your classroom? Do you have a computer, projector, and screen?	Projector, teacher's computer Time weekly in computer lab for class activities.
What technology resources are available in your school? Is there a computer lab or class set of laptops?	Computer lab
What technology resources do your students bring to class? Are they required to have a mobile phone, tablet, or laptop? Do your students have the resources to provide their own technology?	Students bring their mobile phones to class only when instructed to do so for the lesson.

Sample 2 – Continued

Are your students learning in a blended environment? What technology will they use in class and what will they access online?	Not a blended environment.
What accommodations does your class require? What technology considerations appear in their individualized education plans (IEP)? What types of unique abilities must you consider in your lesson planning?	1 student with dyslexia 3 ELL students 2 students with ADHD
Does the prescribed curriculum give you opportunities to incorporate digital skills into the lessons? Do you teach specific digital curriculum? Are you teaching an inquiry model that can incorporate technology?	Yes, I teach digital citizenship classes and include technology in other subjects.
If needed, what disciplinary measures are authorized and appropriate for your students?	Mobile phones impounded for misuse. Escalate to principal, if needed, per school district policy.
Additional notes	

next stage of digital skills. And it's important to note that chronological age does not indicate the same level of readiness. What one 13 year old is able to manage might be more or less than another 13 year old.

The American Academy of Pediatrics guidelines (https://www.aap.org/en-us/Documents/ppe_document108_en.pdf, accessed May, 2019) recommend that youth's screen time be planned in the context of other important activities. Their default recommendation is two hours of screen time per day for those 13 through 18 years old but they acknowledge that some youth will get more time onscreen. They go on to recommend that families focus on the balance of other activities. If the youth gets a full night's sleep, an hour or more of physical activity, meals with family members, and some unplugged time each day, then the amount of screen time can be adjusted. Each family will do this based on the youth's volume of homework, social interactions with friends online, and other screen-time activities in combination with their household's rules and attitudes about screen time. For some families, this means unlimited screen time while others use strict time limits. Most families fall somewhere in between where there are limits but they vary based on the needs, abilities, and maturity of the child in combination with parent's monitoring of healthy lifestyle habits. And for some families the rules change between weekdays and weekends. Vacation also introduces variations with more or less screen time based on the family's wishes and the type of vacation.

As an example, while I write this, it's a rainy Sunday afternoon. I can hear my son talking to his friends on Discord while they cooperatively build a fleet of ocean vessels in *Roblox*. The conversation is lively and filled with social play just as there would be if they were in the same room. But, given the weather and that I'm working on this book, he'll have a long stretch of screen time today. I'm unconcerned because he sleeps well, eats nutritious meals (and he made me breakfast in bed this morning!), and he's physically active for two or more hours most days of the week.

As communities collaborate to support youth emerging as digital citizens, it's important to acknowledge that there are a variety of adults who influence youth and that they are equally influenced by their peers. Youth will see digital behavior modeled by parents, teachers, coaches, spiritual leaders, neighbors, retail clerks, transit workers, and other adults they meet in the community. In turn, as youth move from an attachment to their parents to an attachment to their peers,

their friends (and, possibly, enemies) at school will influence their understanding of digital behavior.

Whether parent, guardian, teacher, or other community member in a position to model digital behavior, your goal is to help raise a child who is able to function effectively in a digital world so that they are ready to both join the workforce and take responsibility for all aspects of their lives as adults. In the chapters ahead, you'll find digital skills grouped in four categories core skills, social skills, study skills, and safety skills.

You'll notice safety skills are just one of the categories. Here we'll touch on the risks of being online and using technology. Rather than offer scare tactics (as many social media educators have done in recent years), you'll focus instead on teaching youth the skills to prevent them from getting into trouble. You'll also find resources to help you get help if something awful should happen to a child or teen in your life. While cyberbullying, luring, and pornography make attention grabbing headlines in the news, most families and teachers are struggling with mundane but vital issues like screen time, reputation management, and securing privacy. Adopt a healthy caution around these issues but try not to let your fear prevent you from helping youth learn healthy digital habits.