

12 Resources for Teaching Digital Citizenship

Richard Byrne - FreeTech4Teachers.com



Elementary School Resources

PBS Kids offers the Webonauts Academy (<http://pbskids.org/webonauts/>) in which elementary school students can learn about safe online behaviors. When students have completed all of the Webonauts missions they will graduate from the Webonauts Academy. The educators tips page offers some practical suggestions for using Webonauts in the classroom or in a school library.

In an effort to teach children about potential dangers online and how to avoid them, the Council of Europe has offers a game called Through the Wild Web Woods (<http://www.wildwebwoods.org>). Through the Wild Web Woods is designed for students ages seven through ten to learn how to spot danger on the Internet and what to do when they do spot danger on the Internet. The game is available in twenty-four languages.

Professor Garfield is a free resource developed in part by the Virginia Department of Education. Professor Garfield teaches students how to be safe online, how to recognize and respond to cyberbullying, and how to decide if something is a fact or an opinion. These educational activities can be found in the free Professor Garfield apps; Online Safety (<http://bit.ly/ftgarfield>), Fact or Opinion (<http://bit.ly/ftgarfield1>), Cyberbullying (<http://bit.ly/ftgarfield2>). All of the free Professor Garfield iPad apps use the same format. The format is a set of comic strips that students read to learn about the issues the app is focused on. At the end of the comic strips students play some simple games to practice recognizing good online behaviors.

AT&T's Safety Land (<http://bit.ly/ftatt>) is a nice game through which kids learn and practice recognizing danger on the Internet. The game is set in the city of "Safety Land." As students navigate from building to building in Safety Land they are confronted with a series of scenarios and questions to respond to. If they respond correctly to each scenario they will capture the

cyber criminal and send him to the Safety Land jail. Students who send the cyber criminal to Safety Land jail receive a certificate that they can print out.

Digital Passport (<http://bitly.com/ftdpp>) is an online program from Common Sense Media. The purpose of the Digital Passport program is to provide students in grades three through five with lessons and games for learning responsible digital behavior. Digital Passport uses videos and games to teach students about cyberbullying, privacy, safety and security, responsible cell phone use, and copyright. Students earn badges for successfully completing each phase of the Digital Passport program.

Middle School / High School Resources

A Thin Line (<http://www.athinline.org/>) is a digital safety education resource produced by MTV in collaboration with other media partners. The purpose of the site is to educate teenagers and young adults about the possible repercussions of their digital activities. A Thin Line offers a series of fact sheets about topics like sexting, digital spying, and excessive text messaging and instant messaging. A Thin Line gives students advice on how to recognize those behaviors, the dangers of those behaviors, and how to protect your digital identity. Students can also take a short quiz to practice identifying risky digital behaviors.

Own Your Space (<http://bitly.com/ftmsft>) is a free ebook designed to educate tweens and teens about protecting themselves and their stuff online. This ebook isn't a fluffy, general overview book. Each chapter goes into great detail explaining the technical threats that students' computers face online as well as the personal threats to data that students can face online. For example, in the first chapter students learn about different types of malware and the importance of installing security patches to prevent malware infections. The fourteenth chapter explains the differences between secured and unsecured wireless networks, the potential dangers of an unsecured network, and how to lock-down a network.

Google has a good set of lesson plans on digital citizenship and digital literacy (<http://bitly.com/ftggtk>) that middle school teachers should take a look at. The lesson plans are divided into three sections; becoming a digital sleuth, managing digital footprints, and identifying online tricks and scams. These digital citizenship lessons are part of Google's Good to Know site. Good to Know is an excellent site on which you can find good and clear explanations of web basics. The detailed lesson plans can be saved in your Google Drive account. Even if you don't use the entire lessons as they were written, they're still worth saving in Google Drive to refer to as you build your own digital citizenship lesson plans.

ThinkB4U (<http://www.thinkb4u.com/>) is a series of web safety videos and tutorials from Google and its partners. Using the "choose your own adventure" aspect of YouTube video editing, ThinkB4U offers interactive videos to educate viewers about things like protecting online reputations, avoiding scams, research and critical thinking, and responsible text messaging. ThinkB4U is divided into three basic sections; students, parents, and educators. Each section addresses nine different topics related to safe and responsible use of the Internet and cell phones. The sections include short videos about the topics, a short written lesson, and some interactive games on the topics of responsible use of the Internet and of cell phones. The Educators' section of ThinkB4U offers lesson plans from Common Sense Media and the National Consumer League. There are lesson plans designed for elementary school, middle school, and high school use.

Seven Digital Deadly Sins (<http://sins.nfb.ca/#/Grid>) is an interactive story produced by the National Film Board of Canada. The story contains seven chapters each containing short videos, essays, and polls. The videos and essays tell the stories of people suffering from digital sins like greed (illegally downloading media) and wrath (cyberbullying). After reading or watching the stories viewers can vote on questions about what they would do in similar situations. Seven Digital Deadly Sins does deal with some content, mostly in the section on lust, that you will want to screen before deciding if it is appropriate for the students in your classroom.

Creating and Protecting Strong Passwords

One of the best ways to protect your online identity is to create strong passwords containing unique characters. Sometimes it's difficult to think of new strong passwords. When you're having a mental block thinking up a new password try PassCreator (<http://passcreator.com>). PassCreator is a free service that helps you create a strong password. To use PassCreator just select the attributes you want your password to have (number of characters, character type, etc.) then press "create." If you don't like the password created for you, just press "create" again to generate another password.

Whenever it is offered as an option, it is a good idea to use two-step or two-factor authentication on the online services you use. Google, Dropbox, Box, and many other cloud services offer this option. Two-step authentication means that just entering one password isn't enough to log into a service. Learn about Google's two-step authentication in this video <https://youtu.be/zMabEyrPRg> and read about it in detail at <http://bitly.com/ftgtwostep>