DIGI - CIVIS

DIGITAL IDENTITY - WHAT IS IT?

15+

SUBJECT: Civic Education, Digital Literacy, Citizenship

LESSON TOPIC: Understanding Digital Identity and how our online presence shapes who we are

DURATION: 50 minutes

LEARNING OBJECTIVE/S:

Main objective of the lesson:

Students will understand what digital identity is, how it is formed, and its importance in the online world. They will also learn how to protect and manage their digital identities responsibly.

Competences that students will acquire:

- Comprehending the concept of Digital Identity and how their online actions and behavior contribute to it.
- Understanding how what they post on social media leaves an impression.
- Ability to differentiate between a positive and negative digital identity and to manage and safeguarde their personal information online.

MATERIALS/RESOURCES NEEDED:

- Introduction: Basics of Digital Citizenship in the EU (https://www.digi-civis.eu/e-learning)
- Real-Life Scenarios for Digital Identity Analysis

METHODS/TECHNIQUES:

- Group discussions
- Real-life scenarios analysis
- Class presentation and feedback

LESSON PLAN OVERVIEW

PREPARATION:
- Thoroughly go over the Digi-Civis eLearning Course Introduction to discover the basics of digital citizenship in the EU.
- Choose a short video or article to introduce the concept of digital identity and the impact of social media on online identity formation.
- Prepare real-life scenarios to discuss real-life examples of how a person's digital identity impacted their life (positively or negatively). Check our examples on the last pages of the Lesson Plan.

IMPLEMENTATION:
Introduction (20 minutes)
- Start by asking students what they think "identity" means and how it might be different in the digital world.
- Using the selected short video, e.g. U of G Library - What is Digital Identity?, explain to students what digital identity is and how it reflects who they are (this includes social media profiles, browsing history, posts, and comments) and explore topics like privacy, security, and the permanence of online content.

Group Activity (30 minutes)
- Divide students into six groups and give each group a real-life scenario of how a person's digital identity has affected their professional or personal life (e.g., a post going viral for the wrong reasons).
- Ask students to analyze the situation and discuss how the person could have managed their digital identity better. Have each group share their findings with the class.
- Finally, ask students to think critically about what kind of personal information should and shouldn't be shared online and discuss with them the long-term effects of their digital identity. Students should reflect on the type of information they share online, how they think their presence on social media influences others' perceptions of them, and the type of content that could harm or benefit their digital identity.

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MORE INFORMATION TO LEARN MORE:
- U of G Library, <u>What is Digital Identity?</u>
- TechTarget, <u>What is a digital identity?</u>
- Common Sense Education, <u>Private and Personal Information</u>
- Eliot Wood, <u>Digital Identity: Are you in control?</u>
- Roxana Nasoi, <u>The Age of Digital Identity</u>

ANNEXES:
- Real-Life Scenarios for Digital Identity Analysis (on the last pages of the Lesson Plan).

HOMEWORK:
- Following the discussion generated by the scenarios analysis, ask students to answer the following additional questions:
1. What strategies can you use to maintain a positive digital identity and to ensure your online actions don't negatively affect your future opportunities?
2. Why is it important to think about your audience before posting something online?
3. How can privacy settings protect your digital identity, and why is it still important to be mindful of what you post?
4. Should digital identity and past posts have such an impact on real-life opportunities? Do you believe these consequences are fair?
5. What steps should you take if you realize your digital identity might negatively affect your future opportunities?

ASSESSMENT:
- Monitor students' participation during group activities, assessing their understanding of the lesson's main takeaways and homework, checking their understanding of digital identity and related concepts, realistic and thoughtful actions to maintain a positive digital identity, clarity and relevance of their reflections.

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REAL-LIFE SCENARIOS
FOR DIGITAL IDENTITY ANALYSIS

1 Scenario: Social Media and Job Interviews

Description: John had just graduated from university and was applying for jobs. He was excited to be called for an interview at a top marketing firm. During the interview, things went well until the interviewer brought up some of his old Twitter posts. John had tweeted negative comments about a previous employer and had used offensive language in some of his posts. The interviewer expressed concern that John's online behavior didn't align with the company's values, and he didn't get the job.

Questions:
1. What mistake did John make in managing his digital identity?
2. How do you think his digital footprint influenced the hiring decision?
3. What steps should John take to clean up his online presence moving forward?
4. Do you think employers should use social media to assess candidates' digital identities? Why or why not?

2 Scenario: Privacy Settings and Online Reputation

Description: Maya is a photographer who uses Instagram to promote her business. Recently, a potential client contacted her about a photo shoot. However, after browsing her personal Facebook page, the client decided not to proceed with the booking. On Maya's Facebook, the client found several posts where Maya had shared personal rants and complaints about other clients. The client said they no longer felt comfortable working with her due to her unprofessional online behavior, despite her impressive photography skills.

Questions:
1. What went wrong with Maya's digital identity in this scenario?
2. Why is it important for Maya to separate her personal and professional digital identities?
3. How could Maya adjust her privacy settings to avoid this situation in the future?
4. How can online behavior on personal social media accounts impact your professional reputation, even if it's unrelated to your job?

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3 Scenario: Offensive Meme and College Application Withdrawal

Description: Alex, a senior in high school, had a hobby of sharing memes with friends on social media. One day, he posted a meme that many people found offensive, mocking a particular group. Even though Alex thought it was just a joke, someone reported the post to the admissions office of the college he had applied to. A few weeks later, Alex received an email saying that his application had been withdrawn due to the nature of his social media posts, which did not align with the college's values of inclusivity and respect.

Questions:
1. Why did Alex's post negatively affect his college application?
2. How does posting offensive content online impact your digital identity?
3. What lesson should Alex learn from this situation regarding humor and sensitivity online?
4. How could Alex ensure that his future social media posts reflect a positive digital identity?

4 Scenario: Oversharing Personal Information

Description: Sophia loves connecting with new people online and has a public profile on all her social media platforms. She often shares personal information, such as where she lives, her favorite places to go, and pictures of her daily routines. One day, she received a threatening message from a stranger who had been following her posts. The stranger knew details about her life and had even found out where she lived, making Sophia feel unsafe and vulnerable.

Questions:
1. What mistakes did Sophia make in managing her digital identity?
2. Why is it important to protect personal information online?
3. What actions should Sophia take to improve her online privacy and safety?
4. How can over-sharing on social media affect your digital reputation and personal security?

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5 Scenario: The Deleted Tweet That Wasn't

Description: Ryan, a university student, tweeted a series of inappropriate jokes about his professors late one night, thinking they were funny and no one would see them. The next morning, realizing his mistake, he deleted the tweets. However, one of his classmates had already taken screenshots and shared them, and they quickly spread around the school. The incident reached his department head, who called Ryan in for a meeting to discuss his behavior and warned him about possible disciplinary action.

Questions:
1. What was Ryan's mistake in assuming his digital footprint could be erased?
2. How did the sharing of his deleted tweets affect his reputation?
3. Why is it important to think about the permanence of online posts, even if they are deleted?
4. What lesson should Ryan take away about responsible online behavior and the consequences of digital actions?

6 Scenario: The Viral Post That Backfired

Description: Sarah, a successful influencer with a large following, was known for her content on wellness and lifestyle. One day, she posted a controversial opinion about a sensitive topic on her Instagram account. The post quickly went viral, sparking a heated debate in the comments section and receiving negative attention from the media. As a result, one of the brands she had been collaborating with decided to end their partnership, stating that Sarah's post did not align with their company's values. This led to other brands distancing themselves from her as well, causing a significant loss of income and professional opportunities.

Questions:
1. What part of Sarah's digital identity led to the loss of her job opportunities?
2. How could Sarah have avoided this situation, considering her role as a public figure?
3. Do you think it's fair for brands to end partnerships based on social media posts? Why or why not?
4. What steps should Sarah take moving forward to rebuild her professional reputation online?