Digital Citizenship, Technology Access, and Internet Safety for Youth and Adults with Intellectual and/or Developmental Disabilities (I/DD)

Why Supporting Digital Citizen Activity of Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities is Critical

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What is Community Participation?

• Full integration in social, civic, and political activities
• Social activities
  • Creating and maintaining one’s social connections or social networks for either one’s social or emotional benefit or to exchange new opportunities and information.
• Civic and political activities (civic engagement)
  • Involves a series of activities that promote civic and political life that better communities.
  • Require both individual actions and interactions with others to improve the quality of life of community members
Technology: Social, Civic, and Political Activity

Essential for building social capital and facilitating social inclusion

Allows people to take collective action on key issues of national importance and facilitates civic and political action

“texting, tweeting, Facebook, Instagram, and other tools have come into play not only for basic communication, but also to organize community rallies, group events, and even political actions” (National Research Council, 2014, p. 36).
Technology and Participation
Technology and Civic Engagement

Local Politics

National Politics
Digital citizens use technology to participate in society for a variety of purposes.

Digital citizen activity, not just digital skills, in the pandemic has become essential for individuals to "confront ideas about the enactment of identities and dialogue online as citizens who collectively work for equity and change" (Buchholz et al., 2020, p. 12).

84% of technology experts indicate there will be "significant social and civic innovation by 2030"
What is Digital Citizenship?

- Knowledge, skills, and access to technology for use across all digital citizenship elements in all life domains and is embedded in national education standards (Ribble, 2017)

- Areas include:
  - digital access, digital commerce, digital communication, digital literacy, digital etiquette, digital law, digital rights and responsibilities, digital health and wellness, and digital security.
Digital Citizenship

How does digital citizenship access and use compare between youth with and without I/DD?
Across most identified digital citizenship constructs, young adults with I/DD had less technology access and use than their peers without I/DD, putting them at greater risk for social isolation and community disengagement.

Secondary data analysis of National Longitudinal Transition Study 2012 data
Fisher, Williamson, Guerra, & Kupferman (2021)
Findings:
Youth with I/DD were...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Digital access</th>
<th>Digital Etiquette</th>
<th>Digital Literacy</th>
<th>Digital communication</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• 69% less like to use a computer</td>
<td>• No more or less likely to experience cyberbullying</td>
<td>• 30% less likely to receive social media instruction</td>
<td>• 86% less likely to text</td>
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<tr>
<td>• 35% less like to use computer for internet for news</td>
<td>• 87% more likely to indicate instruction was helpful</td>
<td>• 55% less likely to Instant Message</td>
<td>• 41% less likely to email</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 62% less likely to have high-speed internet</td>
<td></td>
<td>• 78% less like to use social media</td>
<td>• 78% less like to use social media</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Recent Research on the Digital Divide for Youth

Youth *without* I/DD were 410% more likely to use social media with friends.

Youth with I/DD had less access to the internet or internet-enabled devices, were less likely to use a computer to search for news or to receive instruction.

Minoritized youth with I/DD had less access, instruction, and use of technology.

Gaming seems to be one area without differences.
Digital Civics and Digital Citizenship
Digital Divide for Adults

- Individuals with I/DD have limited digital skills, access to technology, and use technology less for advocacy

- Barriers include concerns for safety, digital literacy and communication challenges, cyber language and etiquette concerns, accessibility, and potentially family or staff

- Access and use of technology:
  - Improves social connections
  - Is important for mental and social-emotional health
  - Improves social identity
  - Increases opportunities for leisure activities
Technology Access and Use Current Work

• Community Engaged Work
• Partnering with The Arc of Illinois
• How Adults with IDD in Illinois are access and use technology; Barriers and Facilitators
• How COVID pandemic has changed advocacy engagement and work to use more technology
How often do you create your own media to share online, like blogging, creating podcasts, music, videos, art, or streaming gaming videos?
In the past 12 months, have you signed an e-mail, Facebook, or other online petition?
In the past 12 months, have you contacted your legislator by sending an email, tweet, or instant message, or by posting a comment on its website or Facebook page?
In the past 12 months, have you contacted an advocacy organization doing work in your community? Contact could be by: sending an email, sending a tweet, sending an instant message, or posting a comment on its website or Facebook page?
Measuring Technology Enhanced Community Participation Outcomes

- Direct Measurement of Technology Access, Knowledge, and Use
  - Digital Propensity Index (DPI)
  - Egocentric network analysis (Ego)
  - Youth Participatory Politics (YPP)
  - Community Participation Indicators from NCI
  - Pew Civic Engagement Survey
- Secondary Data Analysis

How often would you say you interact with your friends and family through Facebook” YPP

Communicates with others online. DPI

Follow elected officials, candidates for office or other public figures. PEW

“In the past 12 months, have you contacted your local, state or federal government by sending an email, tweet, or instant message, or by posting a comment on its website or Facebook page?” YPP
Steps taken: Policy, Practice, and Research

Coleman Institute for Cognitive Disabilities
AAIDD Technology Statement
The Arc Technology Initiative
Technology First
CRPD and ICT
Broadband
What can we leverage?

- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act
- Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 - K Waivers
- Home and Community Based Services –
  - Increasing personal allotment
  - Internet funding
  - Technology support
Partnering with Industry: NCDT

National Collaborative for Disability and Technology (NCDT) is a federally funded effort with over 300 people with disabilities and industry partners proactively working together to co-develop and co-evaluate accessible technology.

• Community participation-focused project partners
  • Engineers become advocates
  • People with disabilities become self-determined experts
• Case examples
Partnering with Industry: Internet Safety

Internet Risks: Cyberbullying, cyber threats, risky content and contacts
Responsible Internet Use: Excessive screen time, social media, gaming
Internet Competency: Digital citizen identity, digital empathy, online footprint, privacy
Education and Guidance: Internet safety education, family guidance
Social Infrastructure: Cyber infrastructure, industry engagement, legal considerations

Let’s have some fun...a few case studies!
Thank you!

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