

## Digital Citizenship and its Activation Means in Educational Institutions

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**[Abstract]** The aim of this study is to build up the knowledge system, through which there will be an explanation of the features of digital citizenship, its concept, and stages of development, goals, and means of activation in educational institutions. Various studies have agreed upon the fact that citizenship, simply and without any complication, is the belonging of a human being to a piece of land, which means to participate and be responsible toward a homeland. However, as a result of scientific and technological development, the concept of citizenship has taken technical dimensions, whose implications have been connected with knowledge and informational revelation. This fact, which has led several countries, especially the developing ones, to concentrate their efforts and plans on the use of technology represented in information the "Internet" and the computer in all educational economic and social fields, with the aim of entering the world of the digital word and with all the criteria, controls, and behaviors it carries; this ensures the perfect and correct use of digital citizenship needed by citizens at all levels, ages, knowledge, skills, attitudes, jobs, and places of residence for the sake of contributing to the service of the individual and community. Digital citizenship aims are creating the right path for guiding and protecting all users, especially children and teenagers, in order to prepare digital citizens who are respectful, produces themselves, and work hard for progress, and be far away from any kind of suppression and tyranny against users and who act against ways that contradict the values of freedom, social justice, and human rights.

**[Keywords]** citizenship, digital citizenship, digital citizen, activation means, educational institution

### Introduction

The history concept of citizenship refers to the Greeks back in the time of Greek democracy, which is considered as the base of the democracy of the world these days. The origin of the concept of citizenship dates back to and refers to both Greek and Roman civilizations. The ideas of "citizen" and "citizenship" were used in these two civilizations to determine the legal and political situation of the Greek and Roman individual (Zidan, 2017). The principle of citizenship was associated with the movement of human history for the sake of justice, equality, and impartiality. The civilizations of Sumar, Ashur, and Babel, and the civilizations of China, India, Persia, the Phoenicians, and the Canaanites, and their ensuing political ideologies, have also contributed to laying the foundations of freedom and equality beyond the will of the rulers, thus opening up a broad horizon for human endeavor to assert its nature, to prove itself, and to be a member of and participate in effective decision-making. According to the theory of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the citizen has human rights that should be offered by the state, and he (at the same time) has a group of social and ethical responsibilities toward the state and community and also towards himself by being a real citizen. Those historical experiences have brought out different meanings of citizenship in regard to thought and practice, close or far away from the current concept of citizenship according to historians (Al-Jum'ah, 2017).

The Department of British Education referred to citizenship as the relation between an individual and the state as determined by the law of that state. including a rank of freedom and the responsibilities

accompanying it. It endows political rights, such as the rights of election and holding public posts (Kalaf,2013). Citizenship in the international encyclopedia is defined as a complete membership in a state or some units of governance. The encyclopedia emphasizes that citizens have some rights, such as the right of voting and the right of occupying public posts, and citizens have, as well, some duties, such as paying taxes and defending country (Nafi', 2004).

In contemporary history, there have been verities in the concept of citizenship according to the intellectual political and social currents that cannot be read, understood, or criticized in isolation from the surrounding circumstances or away from the time and place with all their technological, economic, socially ideological, and educational dimensions. Citizenship is an old and renewed issue that soon dictates itself by addressing any dimension of development, in a holistic sense and especially in light of the cognitive explosion and the digital communications in the information revolution sweeping the world (Al\_Aamer, 2017).

Technology has become an important part of the fabric of society, as it facilitates and conducts the functions and tasks of individuals in daily life in which the studies and statistics show an increasing number of users of digital devices and "Internet" around the world according to the report of (globalwebindex, January, 2015) the number of "Internet" subscribers, which reached 3.010 billion, which is 42% of the population of the world and of whom 2.078 billion participants are on of social communication sites, accounting for 29% of the population of the world. The report itself shows that the number of hours spent by individual daily ranged between 2-7 hours on smart portable devices and 4.4 hours on office computers or laptops (Dahsahn, 2017).

Khaleefh (2017) stated that if the future will continue to highlight the role of communication in the development process and emphasize the importance of moving it to information and ideas, the developing world must develop to take into account the issue of communication technology as a central issue, not only for the sake of development but for survival in compliance with Tony's saying from Harvard University: "The man must choose carefully the steps of his future, for fear of dancing like the dinosaur, and if the human being lived on this planet the greatest one month, the dinosaur has lived 40 months greater and then his destiny was extinction."

Based on the above and with an openness to the global communication and networking system, a number of terms have emerged, such as digital content, digital governance, digital revolution, and digital age. Thus, the digital citizen launched by Professor Marc Breninski refers to individuals who grew up in the technology era. Questions began to appear in the context of digital citizenship, attempts to identify their types, and their relevance and vulnerability to the "Internet," under the power and spread of knowledge, within the prevailing values and principle systems, there remains an endless dialectic of rights and duties. The digital revolution is a double-edged weapon, a factor in transforming societies, a concern that haunts the world and concerns educators, teachers, and those committed to making optimum investments in positive communication techniques and, also, warning and preventing of their dangers to maintain the cohesion of society and further its development.

### **Study Problem**

Bill Gates (2007) said that things are moving so fast, it's hard to waste a lot of time looking back, and the technology won't wait until people are ready for it, even though it is the servant and not the master. And over this and that; people want to understand how this technology will make the future different, and will it make people's lives better or worse? However, the rhythm of technological change is so rapid that it sometimes appears that the world will be as completely different as day is to night, and technology will enable society to make a political decision, so the reality is worth making efforts to establish a relationship with computers and techniques.

With the widespread development of the use of information technology in various fields, the discussion in this area has moved from the protection of the data of organizations and personal data of individuals, to a more comprehensive concept that sees the use of technology as an integrated digital society in which individual behaviors are subject to ethical controls that determine the accepted, desired, and refused behaviors. This is called digital citizenship: in order to contribute to the dissemination and application of this concept, to promote the values of belonging to a country in which the citizen shares with the rest of the population, and to elevate it towards a technologically society conscious of technology requirements (Nuichi, 2017).

The starting point of "digital citizenship" is to work on equal opportunities for all individuals with regard to technology and the provision of digital rights and support for e-access, to achieve the desired benefit as society uses these technological tools in a continuous increase. The goal of a digital citizen should be to work to provide and extend technological access to all individuals. Users must be alert to the fact that electronic access may be limited in some individuals, which requires other resources and ensures that individuals have the obligation to provide digital access mechanisms and techniques to everyone without exception.

Accordingly, this study seeks to highlight the concept, definition, relevance, characteristics, cores, and teaching principles and experience of some countries in this regard. The study seeks, to build a knowledge system in which the current picture of the reality of digital citizenship and the ways in which it is operationalized in educational institutions are evident. Current developments have assigned tasks and responsibilities for educational and societal systems and individuals, which have made all people( at the top of which are home, family, and schools/universities) seriously think about the importance of the current stage of technological development and its consequences in the world, to be qualified and able to deal with the current scientific developments and their challenges, to have an effective degree of proficiency that pushes society toward digitization to further the benefit of rooting the values of the positive digital citizenship in children and young people, to build a generation driven by a culture of knowledge and learning in a safe technological environment.

### **Study Aims**

This study aimed to achieve the following:

- Identifying the concept of citizenship and digital citizenship.
- Emphasizing the dimensions of digital citizenship and the stages of its development.
- Revealing the characteristics of digital citizen
- Revealing the means of activating digital citizenship in educational institutions.

### **Study Questions**

This study was intended to answer the following questions

- What is meant by the concept of digital citizenship?
  - What are the core values of digital citizenship and teaching means?
  - What are the aims/objectives of digital citizenship?
  - What are the means of activating digital citizenship in educational institutions?

### **Study Importance**

The use of digital communication technology, nowadays, is no longer restricted to the electronic exchange of information, but is opened to complete electronic participation in society through buying and selling goods via the internet and other things. However, digital technology has become lifestyle, especially for young children who came to this life carrying in their hands the iPad and other smart devices. Therefore, the importance of the study lies in shedding light on digital citizenship as being

the perfect means for preparing young people to get involved completely in society and participate effectively in the service of the country through the perfect use of modern technology as a culture, which helps teachers, technology leaders, and parents understand what students and children who use technology need to know so they can use technology appropriately. The educational and civil institutions of society, through according to examined plans and specialized curricula, share a great need, nowadays, for adopting a precautionary policy against the dangers of technology and another policy for stimulating its citizens to perfectly benefit from the positive points of the digital world (Ribble, 2006).

### Study Methodology

The researcher depended on the analytical approach in the collection of the opinions, information, facts, and concepts relating to the cores of the study, by referring to a number of studies and previous research articles and by reviewing some global experiences in the field of dealing with digital citizenship in order to benefit from presenting what has been referred to about the aspects relating to the concept of digital citizenship, its importance, characteristics, and application principles for the purpose of clarifying the problem of the study, background, objectives, importance, and the procedures for its application.

### Procedural Definitions

\* **Citizenship**: An Arabic word used to express one's condition when determining the individual's legal and political situation in society. citizenship is the house in which you reside, and it is the homeland and place of a human being. The researcher adds that citizenship is the individual's complete membership in the system and pillars of the state, and the various measures, tasks, and mutual duties involved with the aim of achieving the outputs that promote individuals and society to meet their needs and achieve the requirements of the present age.

\* **Digital citizenship**: How to deal with digital media technology and modern techniques in a way that they become factors in building, developing, and learning for the new generation (Haddad, 2014). Digital citizenship is the group of rules and appropriate and responsible behaviors that should be followed in the digital world in order to optimize the use of technology and the Internet. From this perspective, the researcher identifies digital citizenship as a new way to think about digital technologies and how to use them and to employ them appropriately and responsibly to facilitate students' participation in the broadest sense in the various activities of society; it also includes issues relating to rights and duties and the extent of granted authority to those parties in communication in the exchange of information data and files.

\* **Means of activating digital citizenship**: They are all matters related to the approaches and methods of learning, teaching, training, and planned guidance by parents, teachers, and students for the effective use of resources and digital techniques in order to become digital citizens, interacting with others via contact and communication networks in the light of clear standards, rules and the new digital culture, which enables citizens to safely and legally practice and use modern digital technologies in responsible and rational ways with competence and safety in the digital age.

### Study Plan

After discussing the study's importance, problems, aims, and questions, the study will discuss five main cores:

1. First core: The concept of citizenship, especially digital citizenship, its dimensions, and its development stages.
2. Second core: The constituents of digital citizenship and its teaching means.
3. Third core: The aims of digital citizenship and characteristics of digital citizen
4. Fourth core: Experiences of countries states in citizenship.
5. Fifth core: Digital citizenship and activation means in educational institutions.

### ***First Core: The Concept of citizenship, Digital Citizenship, its Dimensions and Development Stages***

**The concept of citizenship:** Citizenship is, simply and without complication, the belonging of a human being to a piece of land; that is, a person who is firmly settled within a state, has its nationality, participates in ruling, obeys its laws, has a group of rights with other citizens, and abides by his duties for the state to which he belongs.

The last decades of the past century have witnessed successive events and rapid developments that have made the process of change inevitable in most countries of the world in terms of the changing balance of power and the rise of political and economic blocs. The social structures embracing liberal thought and its crossing of geographical and political borders on the bridges supplied by communication technology, stress the ultimate choices of the individual as a reference for daily life, and political choices in work circles, civil work, and the general domain, as well as the special changes surrounding the Arab region. The concept of citizenship has witnessed a clear change in its content, uses, meanings, individual awareness of its principles, and what is linked to it in regard to values and behaviors that represent the means of destruction or building of society and a state's structure.

However, over the past few years the concept of digital citizenship has appeared as a new challenge in the process of technological openness, whose mechanisms and means have been versatile. These mechanisms have addressed youth from a distance, presented a lot of interpretations for regional and international events, shed light on different societal issues that touch the essence of this concept for the individual. They have displayed a conceptual framework wrapped in attractive slogans and have affected people's minds with the thought(s) carried in the air across the borders; this has especially affected young people and those at the age at which they are likely to be influenced or kidnapped in regard to the thought and culture that are controlled by the characteristics of the age and the stage of development in which they live (AL-Sakoot, 2017).

**The concept of digital citizenship:** The past years have witnessed success in the technology of communications and information, accompanied by a change in individuals' capabilities of dealing with technology that is aimed at easy and rapid communication processes and access to the resources of information. Undoubtedly, this modern technological revolution has resulted in behaviors varying between the positive, if perfectly used, and the negative, if used in rebellion against moral rules and legal controls that organize the affairs of a state's human life. The difference between both lies in the manner of use by the individual. Therefore, this revolution requires concern and study of all its technical and educational aspects to identify the extent of its impact on the individual and society (Thomson, 2013).

According to public opinion, digital citizenship is a group of ideas, principles, programs, and methods for parents, teachers, people of education, and supervisors who need to use technology to be able to guide children, students, and users of technology in general. In other words, it is an approach that tries to burden parents and teachers with their responsibilities in dealing with this huge challenge. It also tries to guide scientific research in order to create the perfect means for guiding and protecting young people. Digital citizenship seeks to create the perfect means that protect teenagers and children, taking into account that complete control is not possible; especially from the practical point of view, it has become impossible to

control what children and teenagers have access to on the "Internet" and through mobile resources (Id'aiss, 2015).

Other people have defined digital citizenship as a group of rules, controls, standards, norms, ideas, and principles that are followed in the perfect and sound use of technology and needed by young and old people for the sake of contributing to the advance of their country. Digital citizenship, in short, is protection and guidance from the utilities of modern technologies and being safe from their dangers. It is bigger than just a smart interaction with technology. Digital citizenship can also be defined according to the social encyclopedia as the rules of behavior adopted for the uses of the various technologies, such as the electronic exchange of information and complete electronic participation in society.

Digital citizenship is also defined as the preparation of students to use computer technology in an effective and appropriate way through the development of students' knowledge of the programs of text processing, electronic tables, presentation programs, and software that has different forms of communication and roots that contain the correct concept of digital citizenship and proper use of these technologies appropriately (Indian Department of Education, 2013).

Digital citizenship is defined as a group of criteria, skills, and rules of behavior needed by the individual when dealing with technology so that he can respect himself and other people, learn and communicate with others, and protect himself and others (AL-Mallah, 2016).

Al-Quid (2014) defined digital citizenship as a group of rules, controls, criteria, ideas, and principles followed in the perfect and sound use of the technology, needed by young and old people in order to contribute to the advancement of their country; digital citizenship is, in short, the protection and guidance by which citizens are made safe from modern technologies and their dangers. It means dealing smartly with technology.

Digital citizenship is the group of criteria, controls, behaviors, and traditions as applied in the perfect and correct use of technology, which citizens, with their different ages, jobs, and residence, need to contribute to advance their country. It cares about protection and guidance about the utilities of modern technology and being safe from dangers, understanding the rules of behavior, and learning how to deal with and use it. Digital citizenship is more than a mere teaching instrument; it is a method and means for the good preparation of technology users, or, in short, it is the smart dealing with technology for the sake of a correct digital society.

In light of the previous definition of digital citizenship, the characteristics of this concept can be determined as follows:

1. Awareness of the digital world and its components.
2. The acquisition of effective and appropriately practiced skills in the uses of the digital world with its different mechanisms.
3. Following the moral rules, which make the technological behavior of the person characterized by social acceptability while interacting with others (Sharaf & AL-Damirdash, 2012).

**Citizenship Dimensions:** The concept of citizenship has several dimensions that differ according to the angle from which they are dealt with. The following are some of these dimensions: 1) Cultural dimension: where knowledge represents an essential element in the quality of the citizen that the societal institutions seek. This does not mean that the illiterate person is not a citizen who bear his responsibilities and has loyalty to his country, but knowledge is an available means for the citizen to build up his skills and competencies, which he needs in the same way that national education emerges from the culture of people, taking into account the cultural peculiarities of society. 2) Skill dimension: it refers to the intellectual skills, like critical thinking, analysis, problem-solving, and others. The citizen who has such skills can distinguish things and be more rational and logical in his speech and actions (Fareehah, 2014). 3) Place dimension: it is the physical and human frame in which the citizen lives, namely, the local environment in which he learns

and deals with its individuals. This cannot be achieved without knowledge and lectures inside the classroom; there should be participation that occurs in the local environment and volunteering in the environmental work (Shams, 2017).

Al-Ma'mari (2015) added the following three dimensions:

1. Belongingness: the national dimension, which means the rooting of students' affiliation to their culture, society, and country.
2. Religious: values, like justice, equality, tolerance, freedom, shura, and democracy.
3. Social: the social competence of living with other people and working with them.

**The stages of the development of digital citizenship** (Ribble & Bailey, 2006): 1- Awareness: In this stage, students should have a degree of more cultural technological awareness than providing basic information and knowledge about physical and software components, and the necessity for the emphasis on the presentation of examples of negative and inappropriate use of those physical components. The student also needs to be familiar with the appropriate and the inappropriate when using those modern digital technologies, and he needs a good understanding of the ways they work, their uses, and their impact on him and on others. He needs the awareness of the problems and the things connected with the possibility of using modern digital technologies in a way that his teachers, parents, and friends accept.

2- Guided practice: Students should be able to use technology in circumstances that encourage risk and discovery at early stages; without guided practice, they may not recognize the appropriate way and that it is possible to get help from the following questions about thinking of the way he depends on in using technology: Does he recognize when appropriate things happen? Does he estimate the extent of his acceptance of modern digital technologies? Does he distinguish between the accepted and the unaccepted uses of these technologies? What does he need in order to be aware of his practices of modern digital technologies?

3- Modeling and demonstration: this means providing a clear model of the perfect practice of technology in the classroom. For example, if you were a teacher carrying your mobile phone while being in the classroom, you would shut it down or make it silent. In addition, you can send a message to parents, including a group of questions about what may occur to their minds about the manner of dealing with their children during the different uses of modern digital technologies and discuss them. Adults need to be good models for digital citizenship in order for the child to imitate or follow these models.

4- Feedback and analysis: the classroom should be the place where students can discuss their uses of modern digital technologies to see how they can use them appropriately. This happens through providing them by the constructive critical constituents in order to distinguish between the ways of using these modern digital technologies in the classroom and outside it.

It is difficult for a person to turn back from the behavior or practice that really occurred, but he can think about solving them after their occurrence. Without providing him with the opportunities of self-meditation in this occurring behavior, the possibility of repeating it will be more and more in the future (Sharaf AL-Dimirdash, 2012).

### ***Field (Domains) of Digital Citizenship and Means of Their Teaching***

**Field (Domains) of digital citizenship.** The International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) determined nine general domains which from digital citizenship (Shihadah, 2017).

1) Digital access: Complete electronic participation in society: Digital citizenship makes it possible for equal opportunities for individuals to use and have access to technology, allowing equal digital rights, supporting electronic access, opposing the principle of electronic deprivation, which hinders the student's development and prosperity and reduces the digital difference (the gap between those who have access to

the different technological forms and their use and those who do not have that access). Technological access may be limited for some individuals as a result of economic and political reasons. Therefore, the ratio of digital access may be higher in developed countries than developing ones. Nowadays, there are a lot of international programs for furthering individuals' right of digital access in countries with economic problems or in the countries that block some forms of technology, not allowing their citizens to have access to the "Internet."

2) Digital commerce: Electronic merchandising and selling goods: The biggest part of the market economy nowadays, is performed via technology and its various channels. Digital citizenship equips the individual with the knowledge relating to this process concerning the rules and regulations of the use of technology, especially security and safety, and those relating to the laws of the state. In spite of the several advantages of electronic commerce, one should be careful when electronically buying and selling goods.

3) Digital communication: Electronic exchange of information: One of the most prominent modern technological developments is that relating to the field of communications with all its forms and techniques. Due to them, the world has become a small village, and the opportunity has been possible for all to communicate and co-operate with another person in any place in the world and at any time. In this context, digital citizenship cares that the individual should have the ability to make sound decisions for a lot of the choices of available digital communications and be aware how to use them.

4) Digital literacy: the process of teaching and learning technology and the use of its instrument The measurement of illiteracy, these days, has become connected with the individual's ability to use technology. The contribution of digital literacy is an individual and societal responsibility. Therefore, all efforts should work together for providing the opportunities of learning, teaching, and training to use technology and its different instruments in perfect and useful ways. As technology has paved its way toward all fields of the individual's life, digital citizenship digitally educates and teaches individuals what they need from technology in order to use it appropriately, benefit from its positive points, and avoid its negative points, as well as acquiring the skills of informational literacy.

5) Digital Etiquette: Digital standards of behavior and procedures: All of us care about the extent of etiquette when we deal with others face to face. Some people need training in order to acquire the skills that require standards and procedures. The same thing should apply when dealing with the others digitally. A digital citizen has good etiquette in digital citizenship cares about the spread of a digital culture of etiquette among individuals and their training in order to be responsible for a new digital society to behave in a civilized way by taking into account the values, principles, and standards of good conduct.

6) Digital law: Social responsibility of business and actions: They are the laws in the digital society that deal with the question digital ethics in order to disclose and punish the immoral use of technology or actions called digital crimes to protect the individual's rights and achieve his security and safety digitally. There have been several laws passed by the digital society that should be noticed, and any illegal action should be accounted for by these laws, like hacking the information of other people or stealing their data or spreading viruses and other such electronic crimes. Digital law treats four main issues: rights of writing and publication, privacy, moral issues, and hacking, and the digital citizen respects digital rules, publishes them, and encourages others to abide by them.

7) Responsibilities and digital rights: The freedom that all people have in the digital world: In the same way that the state determines its citizens' rights in its constitution, the digital citizen also has a package of rights such as privacy and free expression and other things. These rights should be understood as an appropriate way to light the digital world in terms of duties and responsibilities that come with these rights. They cannot be separated, and the digital citizen should recognize the perfect manner of the use of technology in order to become productive and efficient.

8) Wellness and digital health: The psychological and physical health in the world of digital technology:



The inappropriate use of technology is accompanied by physical and psychological problems that affect the individual. This leads to the appearance of ergonomics or the engineering of human Factors, which means the physical and psychological suitability between machines with their different shapes and human beings who deal with and use them. Digital citizenship cares about the spread of awareness and culture about the healthy and sound use of technology and the application of the standards of ergonomics.

9) Digital security (self-protection): Measures of ensuring digital prevention and protection: There is no society without people who practice illegal acts, such as theft and deformation, and the same applies to the digital society. Therefore, necessary precautionary measures in this regard should be taken to ensure prevention, protection, and security of individuals. In the same way we put locks on the doors of houses and alarm systems in them to provide a certain level of protection, similar measure in the digital society should be applied, such as making reserve copies of data and fixing anti-virus and ant-hacking programs and other measures in the digital world. The digital citizen is responsible for taking security measures for protecting his data and privacy from any outside invasion.

**Methods of Teaching Digital Citizenship:** Shihatah (2013) added: There are several methods for teaching and clarifying the already mentioned nine cores of digital citizenship, the principles of respect, education, and protection are considered some of these methods. This teaching method divides the cores of digital citizenship into three principles, and each principle includes three cores as follow: 1) The principle of respect yourself - respecting others includes: digital access: it means complete electronic participation in society; digital suitability; it means the digital standards of behavior and measures; and the digital rules: they are the electronic responsibility for jobs and acts. 2) The principle of teach yourself - communicate with others includes: digital commerce: electronic buying and selling of goods and products; digital communication: the electronic exchange of information and the principle of digital literacy; the process of teaching and learning technology and the use of its instruments. 3) The principle of protect yourself - protect others, which includes: digital rights and responsibilities: they are the freedom that all have in the digital world; digital security: they are the measures of ensuring electronic prevention and protection; and digital health and security: the psychological and physical health in the world of digital technology.

### ***The Aims of Digital Citizenship and Characteristics of Digital Citizenship***

**The aims of digital citizenship.** The aims of digital citizenship: Digital citizenship has been connected with what is known as digital life, and the basic aim is the creation of the right way to guide all users and protect them, especially children and adolescents, through the encouragement of desired behaviors and the eradication of bad behaviors in digital transactions. This means the building up of a digital citizen who loves his country and works hard for its progress, far away from any kind of suppression and tyranny against users, or what contradicts with the values of freedom, social equality, and human rights. Moreover, the teaching aim of digital citizenship is the improvement of learning outcomes and the preparation of students within the frame of the rules of the appropriate and responsible behavior for the use of technology in order to become citizens as follows (Hassan, 2012):

1. Acquainting the different age stages with the concept of digital citizenship in a good way.
2. Raising the level of electronic security.
3. Protecting young people with sound digital behavior.
4. Lessening the negative reflections of the "Internet" use on real life.
5. Spreading the culture of morality, especially free expression.
6. Facilitating and clarifying the perfect ways of the individual's dealing with a certain electronic situation or case through the preparation of an integrated reference of common electronic issues.
7. Transferring the concept of strict control and absence of privacy to the concept of self- control

- according to prevalent social controls.
8. Providing the social communication of a non-violent environment.

**Characteristics of digital citizen:** The present digital citizen is different from the citizen nowadays in two aspects: he accepts the digital reinforcement as a reality that cannot be separated from the human existence and as being a digitally wise person. In both cases, he gets help from the digital advantages in order to develop the internally instinctive capabilities to make wise decisions. According to the international Society of the Technology of Education (ISTE), the digital citizen is characterized by a group of qualities as follows (AL-Arfaj, 2014):

1. Identifies the fact that technology and its instruments do not mean all of life.
2. Abides by security and respects the rights of intellectual possession.
3. Makes sure about what is published and what he deals with.
4. Respects cultures and peculiarities of the societies of the hypothesized environment.
5. Maintains personal information.
6. Manages the time spent for the manner of using technology with a purpose.
7. Protects self against corrupted beliefs and rumors spread via multimedia.
8. Stands firm against suppression via the "Internet."

### ***The Experiences of Some Countries in Digital Citizenship***

All individuals should realize the meaning of digital citizenship does not aim at putting on limits or obstacles for the sake of control and observation as control for the sake of control. This sometimes reaches the limit of suppression and tyranny against users in a way that contradicts with the values of freedom, social equality, and human rights. Digital citizenship aims at finding out the right way for guiding and protecting all users, especially children and adolescents, by encouraging desired behaviors and eradicating bad ones in digital transactions for the sake of a digital citizen who loves his country and works hard for its progress.

Several advanced countries, like Britain, the United States, and Canada teach their school students specific topics about digital citizenship within the frame of the curriculum of digital education. France is planning to make the topic of digital citizenship a great national issue. Similarly, Australia put forward a project under the slogan (communication with confidence: development of the digital future of Australia), which states the spread of the teaching of digital citizenship and training parents and teachers about it according to a national integrated plan, that cares about providing the student with a huge number of skills in the field of using Twitter, electronic texting, and the Facebook, as well as providing him with the ability to use some well-known electronic sites for the purpose of learning and studying.

The curriculum of digital citizenship also teaches students essential skills, like research skills, communication, and the skill of problem-solving, besides enriching his knowledge with the culture and history of his country and promoting his belief in the values of freedom, justice, and democracy (Cayir, 2011).

The Spanish government adopted a project for the higher education of digital students that is an international project that aims at investigating how students after the secondary stage use technology in their lives and study. Canadian educational polytechnic (BCIT) and the Canadian Center of Research took part in this project by using the instrument of surveying opinions designed by (BCIT). The instrument was applied to Catalonia University in Spain. Based on the results of this opinion survey, there was little difference between the generation of the internet and the non-internet one in regard to the method of learning and the use of information technology "ICT." The result concluded that the concept of the internet

generation, as cited in literature, was contradictory and unreal (Sabti, 2015).

In this regard, the International Union of Communications for the first time prepared an estimate model of the size of digital population in the world. It appeared that it formed more than 5% with a little number of the world population, namely, 30% of the young population. According to the report, the digital citizens in 2016 were a half-million digital citizens of the whole population of the world (about 7 billion - 5.2%). At the global scale, digital citizens are from the minority of today's youth. This is mainly attributed to the relatively little use of the "Internet" in a lot of developing countries, which have big numbers of young residents. Also, information technology and communications is rather a modern phenomenon.

Some Arab countries, including Gulf Co-operative Council Countries and Egypt achieved success in copying the international innovation connected with digital citizenship. Of these experiences is what the Saudi Ministry of Education (2012) referred to when it stated that each person of education, whether in the institutions of higher or general education, is committed to establishing an educational strategy in which the student achieves the dimensions and standards of digital citizenship through the syllabuses of national and family education and the computer and through the co-curricular activities, school broadcasts, and mosque groups in order to encourage students to expand their communication networks at local and international levels, in light of a joint approach the base of which is the respect for other cultures and societies and a commitment to the basics of the moral treatment in the employment of the programs and applications of social communication for serving science and culture through teaching and learning strategies that establish life skills.

The study of Al-Mslamani and AL-Dosooqi (2014) revealed the importance of digital citizenship and the extent of need for it in our time through sample of secondary education students in Egypt. The study revealed the increase in the students' willingness to use the digital technology with all its different types, as well as their lack of acquaintance with the appropriate and accepted standards of behavior connected with the use of technology. This, in turn, is negatively reflected on students at this stage in a way that they become unqualified for dealing with the people of technology and are unable to adapt to its positive and negative consequences.

### ***Meaning of Digital Citizenship and Its Activation in Educational Institutions***

The concept of digital citizenship has a strong relationship with the educational system, as it ensures the help of teachers, people of education, and parents to understand what students should know for using technology appropriately and correctly. Digital citizenship is more than a mere instructional instrument, but it is a method of preparing students to completely get involved in society and participate effectively in serving the interests of the country in general and in the digital field in particular. The educational institution (pre – school, school – university) represent a social environment and a cultural context that has in traditions, philosophy, and laws passed by the state to cope with the culture, aims, and philosophy of the society to which it belongs, interacts in and with it, affects it and is affected by it. It has the aim of spreading its highest values in order to achieve its political, social, and economic aims.

The study syllabuses are learned by all students over a long period of time, whether it is the academic (school) day or the academic year or the age of the learner. It affects him and adjusts his behavior, besides providing him with the different kinds of information that helps him in his life. Therefore, it is considered an important instrument for achieving intellectual communication and social solidarity in society.

Any purposeful, meaningful teaching in the twenty-first century should stimulate all the phenomena of human intellectual abilities and reinforce the enrichment of cultures and local values, through the transfer of democratic values and cultural standards. Education contributes to encouraging civil behaviors and supporting and strengthening the building of social capital. This results from membership in the social network, which ensures access to resources and forms security in times of crisis. It appears from what has already been mentioned that children need many things relating to a new digital culture, which enables

them to have security, legal practice, and the responsible rational use of modern digital technologies in order to become digital citizens who interact with others via contact and communication networks in light of clear standards and rules (Sharaf & Al-Damirdash, 2012; Al-Dahshan, 2016):

- 1) Planning study curricula for the first grades that deal with the negative and positive points of digital contact, how to benefit from them, and the best way of dealing with them; it includes how to teach the concept of electronic responsibility, the limits of the individual in the digital space, and the mechanism of checking obtained information with the aim of the best use of technology. The citizen should be prepared to live in harmony with himself and his values in spite of the flowing stream of information, which could clash with a societal culture. A number of specialized people of education should choose and implement the content in order to teach students the methods and ways through which they can be guided to word the perfect use of the internet with the aim of protecting them from the dangers and negative points of the digital culture for the sake of creating an effective digital citizen who uses modern technology perfectly to serve and protect his society and country and to be far away from causing offense to others or committing informational crimes.
- 2) Developing the programs of training teachers in a way that suits the requirements of preparing students for the digital age and preparing them for instruction in classrooms that depend on the most recent educational techniques and advanced strategies to cope with the changes in the environment, such as the hypothetical classes and new knowledge of study content and new educational strategies that are available in educational systems via the "Internet." The preparation programs should include aids and activities for continuous contact with graduates via the Internet to have access to the new educational practices and benefit from them.
- 3) Acquainting children at different age stages with the operation of modern digital technologies, their uses, and their effects on them and others, providing them with the necessary skills to use them safely, promote the knowledge of children and parents about rights, commitments, and digital duties, besides promoting their awareness and knowledge about the problems that may result from the irrational use of digital technologies and ways and methods of overcoming them.
- 4) Providing parents and educators a list of guides on the most important directions about the questions in their minds about the appropriate treatment of their children during the different uses of modern digital technologies and discussing with them and clarifying the views of specialists on appropriate occasions, answering their questions with the development of the skills that enable children and parents to distinguish between accepted and unaccepted uses of the different types of modern digital technologies, and presenting replies to questions during use.
- 5) Seeking the offering of mechanisms to ensure the availability of the technologies of digital access to all without exception and provision of the equal digital rights, supporting the electronic access of all individuals, especially people with special needs, intensifying efforts. by legislators for passing legislation and regulations that ensure performing their rights, and expectations of the horizons of current development in the technology of communications and information and their software to facilitate the use of the people with special needs, employ them, and take all measures that remove their digital and informational illiteracy.
- 6) Including the topic of digital citizenship and its different fields in some syllabuses of the different stages of education (university teaching in particular) with different aspects. For example, the faculty of education can deal with certain topics, such as the perfect use of information technology and the ethical domains when dealing with the computer and other modern technologies and the culture of peace and dialogue, while the faculty of computers deals with all that is related to teaching protection programs and information security with emphasis on the acquisition and application of practical skills connected with that. The faculty of law may teach the legal aspects relating to crimes. The faculty of social service and departments of sociology teach the social dimensions of the problem. The

departments of psychology in the faculties of education and arts can deal with the psychological characteristics of those who commit crimes and how to rehabilitate criminals to be integrated in society. The faculty of commerce can teach the economic dimensions of electronic crimes and the losses resulting from them. In this way, the issue is dealt with from all aspects.

- 7) Caring about the development and teaching of children's critical thinking in light of the increasing dependence of all ages on social and digital media to obtain information to satisfy the needs of communication. Due to the difficulty of prevention and blocking some of those resources and sites, youth in Arab societies should be brought up on critical thinking by teaching them not to take for granted all that is published, trained to select and benefit from positive things, and avoid the negative things of those technologies through the use of the methods of questioning, investigation, and criticism in educational activities in ways that prepare the students who have the ability to make decisions, equip them with science and knowledge, develops the value of work, encounters aggressive intellectual currents, respects time and its exploitation, attempts to acquire information and skills that help the development of creative thinking as the power of technology lies in the ability to manage and employ it, not only in owning it.
- 8) Holding forums, workshops, and discussion seminars for the awareness of parents, all categories of youth and adults in society, by co-operation and co-ordination with some department and national societies, as well as co-operation with business people, for the purpose of helping parents guide their children in soundly dealing with the information network and providing them with the most recent educational methods that can be used at home in order to deal with digital means in a positive way, acquaint them with the negative effects that may result from the bad use, and guide them toward conducting family dialogues and discussions with their children in a quiet and logical dialogue and answer their questions about good and bad thoughts, information, and knowledge about technology's uses.
- 9) Encouraging and guiding student children to conduct scientific research and cultural competitions about all issues relating to the rights and duties of the citizen in the digital age and the fields and cores of digital citizenship and presentation of study programs for the students of higher studies about digital citizenship, the digital age, and the guidance of the research and studies conducted by the students of citizenship for master and doctoral dissertations, members of teaching staff for the sake of studying digital education and digital citizenship in a deep academic way to contribute to the spread of culture in society.

### **Conclusions**

Through what has already been mentioned, we can say that the concept of citizenship reflects the state of citizens, and it is the base of societal systems in countries. However, when does the individual really become a citizen? Citizenship is not based on general principles and does not carry a single, stable and agreed-upon meaning, but it contains a basic principle and a vital component, namely, belongingness that cannot be achieved without education, instruction, and social upbringing. They are, first, very necessary for the achievement of the concept and meaning of citizenship and, second, intertwining with digital technology without which the individual remains a mere citizen who just belongs to a certain thought not more than that. Digital citizenship is not an essence but is practiced in reality and cannot be achieved without a clear understanding of its meaning and content and what measures are required for its implementation.

### **Recommendations**

- 1) Rooting the concept of the culture of change and development in society for the sake of contributing to the spread and application of the concepts of digital citizenship, starting from the family, street, and school after that, and to convince people that change and development represent current national requirement, not just an

intellectual triviality. 2) Reconsidering the programs and curricula of educational institutions and controlling all their inputs and implementation measures in a way that conforms to the requirements of the digital revolution in order to prepare the digital citizen to be capable of coping with the requirements of the present stage. 3) Seeking to unite efforts for employing technology in its correct and perfect scientific way according to sound rules, taking into account the social and legal controls that work for limiting its negative points for individuals and society.

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