

Digital Citizenship Lesson Plan
Children's Privacy Online

General Topic (as defined in the Digital Literacy Framework)	DB7
Digital Citizenship b) Privacy and Security	
Applicable Grade Range	
3-5	
Outcome(s) to be Addressed	
The student understands that children's websites must protect their private information and how to identify these secure sites by looking for their privacy policies and privacy seals of approval.	
Importance / Significance of Lesson	
Under the guidelines set out in the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (1998), companies are restricted in how they collect, share or use personal information collected on children under the age of 13. The intent of the act is protect the privacy and ensure the safety of children when they are working online. It is important for students to understand that although this act does limit them from having profiles on many sites (due to age requirements), it is meant to protect them from having companies mine their information and direct advertise to (and potentially take advantage of) them based on their online activities.	
Duration	
20 minutes	
Overview	
Students will understand the meaning of COPPA and work to find and understand Privacy Policies of various common websites.	
Required Resources	
Computer hooked up to a projector Class set of laptops/access to the computer lab OR class set of iPads/iPods	

Lesson Plan and Extension Activities

Introduce COPPA as legislation that was developed to protect children's online activities. Note that COPPA applies when students require an account to log in to a website (not just using a website to play a game with no ability to save or track progress, this only pertains to websites where students have a username and password). Personally identifiable information, such as name, birthdate, address, phone number, etc.), is protected for children under the age of 13 and companies are restricted in the ways that they can collect, share and use the information for purposes such as advertising.

One of the biggest ways that this affects our students is their ability to have accounts of their own on sites such as Facebook or Twitter. Ask students to raise their hands if they already have a Facebook account? Instagram? Twitter? In all likelihood a number of students will raise their hand for each. By law, children under the age of 13 are not allowed to have accounts on these sites. However, a lot of tweens and pre-teens do have accounts regardless of the age restriction. Some have parent support in setting up these accounts and others simply modify their date of birth on their profile in order to bypass the age restriction.

Emphasize that these age restrictions are put into place to protect children and the limit information about them that can be collected and used.

Show the students the privacy policy for Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/legal/terms> and find the Registration and Account Security section. Note "5. You will not use Facebook if you are under 13." This means it is actually against policy (and the law) to have a Facebook account unless you are 13 or older.

Show students the privacy policy for Weebly: <http://www.weebly.com/privacy/> and find the 'Information relating to Children' section (about half way down). Note that students can use education.weebly.com for school sites under the age of 13, but regular use is limited to those 13 and older.

Have students work in groups to research Privacy Policy and Terms of Use for a number of popular applications and programs that they use or have heard of. Have a group sharing session where students list websites and age restrictions. Emphasize the need to follow these guidelines as they are in place to protect students.

The reality is, a number of students already have profiles on these sites with parental permission. Therefore it is important to provide students with tips that will help them to remain safe, even when using such sites:

Some ideas to maintain student safety online:

- 1) When setting up accounts don't use real names. For a username choose a nickname or phrase. Teachers can set up student accounts (for instance on education.weebly.com) by choosing letters that represent their school as a first name, and the child's first name as a last name. Or choose letters that represent the school and a series of numbers to represent each student.
- 2) Don't post student photos online.
- 3) Don't post any information that could identify where students are located, student's age or their names.

Emphasize that students don't really need most of these accounts and suggest that they wait until they are 13 when they will be legally able to have an account. Advise them to set up a profile only if they are allowed to have one, and preferably with the help of their parents.

Adaptations

Younger students won't likely understand the concept of COPPA and it will be up to the teacher to ensure that information they provide to websites in the creation of student accounts does not include personally identifiable information.

Older students are not protected by COPPA, however, they will benefit from understanding what sorts of information is collected about them and how it is used. Therefore looking at Privacy Policies will help them to understand what sorts of information it is safe for them to share online.

Additional Resources

<http://www.coppa.org/> Information on the Act

<http://www.onguardonline.gov/articles/0031-protecting-your-childs-privacy-online> more info

<http://www.weebly.com/privacy/> Weebly Privacy Policy

<https://www.facebook.com/about/privacy/> Facebook Privacy Policy

<http://instagram.com/about/legal/privacy/> Instagram Privacy Policy

<https://twitter.com/privacy> Twitter Privacy Policy

<https://www.google.com/intl/en/policies/privacy/> Youtube Privacy Policy

Cross-curricular Outcomes Also Addressed

Social Studies – research skills

Language Arts – reading for information

~developed by Kristin Sward, 2014



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Date: _____

Name: _____

Website Age Restrictions

Choose a number of your favourite websites that require an account and search their Privacy Policy or Terms of Use pages. Find the age requirements for each site and list them here:

Website:	Age Requirement	# of students who have an account
Weebly		
Facebook		
Instagram		
Twitter		
Youtube		

Take a poll of students in your class who already have an account for one of the sites listed above. Graph the data that you collect below

