INFORMATION MATTERS, WITH OR WITHOUT THE INTERNET

HOW DO WE STAY INFORMED TODAY?

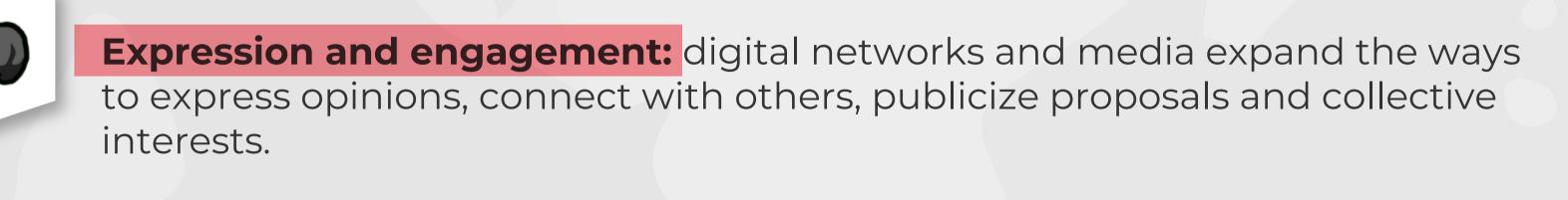Most young people use digital technology to communicate and to access information.

In the last 40 years, digital technology is increasingly visible in education, from formal material like electronic books, videos, online courses and digital libraries to informal materials created in social forums and networks.

There is varied access to the digital world: it depends on your connectivity, socio-economic circumstances and the support provided by teachers.

There are also other information sources besides the Web: radio, newspapers, posters, community meetings.

Being well informed enables us to take better decisions and participate actively in democratic processes.

THE ADVANTAGES OF DIGITAL CONNECTION

Expression and engagement: digital networks and media expand the ways to express opinions, connect with others, publicize proposals and collective interests.

Greater awareness, multiple perspectives: Access to the digital world brings us closer to different perspectives on our environment and opens up new opportunities for social, political and cultural engagement.

Shrinking Distances: The technologies facilitate youth and their communities working together, they make it possible to share ideas and projects beyond the place where each person lives.

Freedom of expression is a fundamental human right that is indispensable for democracy.

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN!

Access: Digital technology is not equally accessible to everyone: it depends on socio-economic circumstances, teachers and connectivity.

Verify the information!: Before sharing or believing what is circulating on the Internet, it is essential to check your sources and confirm that the information is trustworthy.

Understand the risks: When the information is not verified, you run the risk of trusting and sharing false content and weakening other people's trust in society and democracy.

Privacy and rights: Unregulated internet activity can affect democracy and result in invasions of privacy, incitement to hate or extreme polarization.

Negative impacts: Cyber-hate, social isolation, and a lack of data security all show that anonymity can be used to harass people and to spread harmful information.

A democratic digital environment is built on respect: think before sharing, avoid cyber-hate, listen to different voices.

THE BEST TOOL IN THE DIGITAL UNIVERSE: CRITICAL DIGITAL LITERACY

What is it?

A combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes to use, understand and evaluate digital technologies.

Be critical about the information that you consume and create.

Recognize hate speech.

Analyze, question messages, recognize bias and verify the accuracy of the information.

Essential Skills

Evaluate and verify sources and messages.

Recognize the social, political and economic implications of the information.

Create and share responsible content, respecting privacy and intellectual property.

Promote trustworthy information that will strengthen trust and democratic dialogue.

Practice secure use of digital technology and protect personal data (cybersecurity).

School is Key!

It offers a space where one can learn and think critically about the huge quantity of available information.

It promotes student engagement and dialogue as practices of digital citizenship.

It nurtures respect, responsibility and care in the use of technology.

It supports us in the development of digital skills, cybersecurity and critical citizenship, providing teachers as guides for this collective process.

OAS Inter-American Democratic Charter Corner

Article 4

Transparency in government activities, probity, responsible public administration on the part of governments, respect for social rights, and freedom of expression and of the press are essential components of the exercise of democracy.

FOSTERING HEALTHY EXCHANGES ON NETWORKS

What can be done to stay protected and informed?

Think before sharing! Never forget that your posts may have consequences and may affect others!

Tips on verifying information:

Scrutinize the heading: it may be exaggerated and could provoke emotional reactions.

Read ALL the content: the title does not always reflect the content.

Check the source Is it a known source? Who is the author?

Look at the date and the context: Make sure the data in the publication is not out of date or out of context.

Are there photos? Check on the Internet to verify them.

BE CAREFUL WITH STRANGE WEBSITES OR ACCOUNTS Check the URL, spelling errors or incorrect logos.

THE ROLE OF YOUNG PEOPLE MATTERS

Transform yourselves into Informed, Active, Digital Citizens.

Remember: the capacity to **analyze critically** is fundamental for dealing with digital challenges and for building a **more just and engaged world**.

Check your facts before sharing.

Think about the impact of what is being shared.

A well-informed society is a freer and more democratic society.

Technology is a powerful tool!

What you do with it helps to define the type of community and future that we construct!

Sources: OAS (2000), OAS (2025), GEM Report (2024), Larron-Ureta (2016), MINEDUC Chile (2025), Interamerican Democratic Charter.

U.S. Mission to the Organization of American States