

## Using digital devices for good

Now that most of us are working and learning from home, digital devices are playing a bigger role in our lives. Many of us are now relying on these devices for work and school and for staying connected to the outside world. With devices playing an increasing role in our lives during lockdown, people are questioning how it is used. For example, a recent study found that 60% of adults had read false news in recent weeks. For more information about how to spot misinformation check out the misinformation quiz in our Coronavirus Newsthink.

The fewer positive aspects of relying on devices are balanced by stories of how they can be used as a force for good. It is an important method for people to connect and communicate with friends, loved ones and the wider community whilst social distancing measures are in place. Platforms for accessing and sharing schoolwork and apps which help us learn and test our skills are vital for learning when teachers are far away.

These quick reflective activities encourage us to start to examine the role digital devices play in our lives, and how we can use it responsibly and with kindness.

### Learning objectives

Learners will:

- Consider the positive and negative aspects of using digital devices
- Examine how they use digital devices to connect to others
- Develop kindness and resilience
- Discuss how digital platforms can be used positively and with kindness

### Discussion activity: Digital stats

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Begin by thinking about how many people use digital devices in the world.

- > How many digital devices do you use? (This includes phones, tablets, gaming consoles, TV etc.)
- > What app or programme do you use most?
- > How many hours a day do you spend on social media?

Encourage learners to think about their experience. What about these numbers worldwide?

- > 5.9 billion people use a mobile phone.
- > 4.5 billion people now use the internet (60% of the population)
- > The average time people spend on their devices each day is 3 hours 40 minutes,

Now consider:

- > What does this tell us about how people are using digital devices?
- > What might the main reasons be for people using digital devices?

### Walking debate

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Ask learners to reflect on their own use of digital devices and platforms and how they think their experiences have been. Read out the following statements and how far they agree or disagree. You can draw a scale on a piece of paper and point to where they are on the line or even label one side of the room as 'agree' and one as 'disagree' to move towards each response to each statement below. Consider or discuss why you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:

- > I use platforms like YouTube a lot.
- > The things I see online are usually kind.

- > I leave comments on things I read or see online.
- > I mostly use my device to play games.
- > Using digital devices and apps help me to learn.
- > I see a lot of information online and I am not sure what is true and what is not.
- > I feel connected to other people through digital devices.
- > Online bullying is a big problem.

## Connections

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Connecting with people is important, especially now. It is easy to feel isolated when we are inside, away from our friends and social groups. Although we are apart physically, digital devices can help us feel close to our loved ones. Encourage learners to think about:

- > Why these connections are important to you?
- > Why is it important to stay in touch especially now?
- > How can we safely remain in contact with each other?

Draw a map with their name in the middle. Close to their name write the names of those they live with, and then further away those they are connected to in different ways using digital platforms and devices. Draw a different coloured line to represent a different kind of connection, maybe blue for face to face, yellow for telephone, green for email etc. It is good to remember that although we are apart, we are not alone.

Reflect on the map. Ask learners if there is anyone not on the map who they want to connect with more? Maybe a family member who doesn't have internet or a classmate they can't contact. How can they stay connected to them at this time? Maybe they can't contact them now but can later. Have them think of how they could create a diary or letter about their life now to share with them in the future.

## Sharing kindness

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Think about the ways we have used digital devices to share kindness during this time. For example, YouTube influencers using their videos to talk about washing your hands or correct social distancing. How can we use our devices kindly? This could also mean sharing them with your family members or taking regular screen breaks to be kind to your eyes.

One way to share kindness is for parents and teachers to share Kind Acts recorded on the Power of Kindness Calendar on social media using #Powerofkindness. Remember to practice safe internet skills.