THE CHANGING FACE OF CIVIC LITERACY EDUCATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY – A CANADIAN PERSPECTIVE

Dalia Naujokaitis
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Dalia M. Naujokaitis is a Lithuanian-Canadian educator, consultant in media and information literacy, and assistive technology specialist. She has received two Canadian Prime Minister's Awards and a Governor General's Citation for Teaching Excellence, as well as the Global Schoolnet Foundation Lifetime Achievement Award for her work in pioneering online shared learning projects in cyberspace between schools in 28 countries. Dalia has given papers on her work at several Crimea Conferences and is a corresponding Member of the IFLA Standing Committees on Information Literacy and on School Libraries.

Overview

- This paper will explore from a Canadian perspective initiatives in promoting digital citizenship among young people of the Internet generation

- Digital citizenship: the ability to use technology safely, responsibly, critically, and pro-actively in order to contribute to society
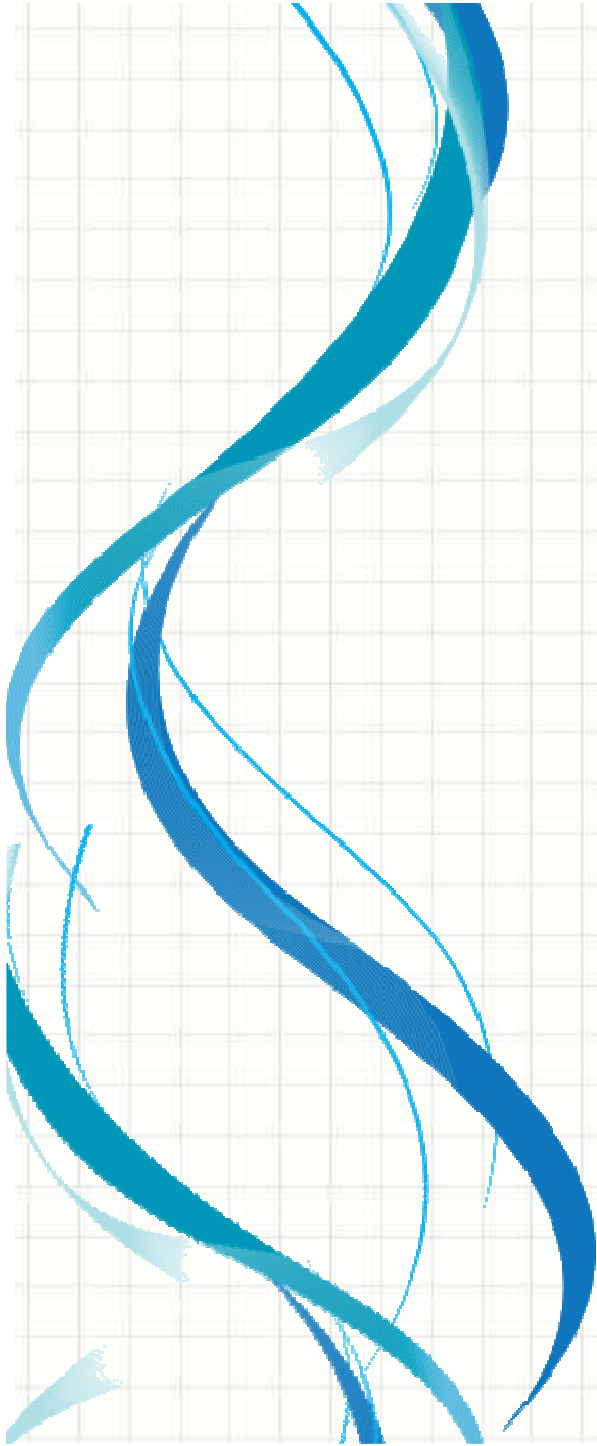
The Net Generation

The Net Generation – Digital Natives

- young people born into a world of laptops, cell phones, ipads, social networking, texting

- speak the language of computers, the internet and digital media with ease

- spend an average of 8 1/2 hours each day exposed to digital technology

- aptitudes and learning styles of the Internet Generation reflect the multidimensional and fast-paced digital environment and culture in which they were raised.

Don Tapscott, *Grown Up Digital (2009)*
Marc Prensky, "Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants, http://www.marcprensky.com/writing/.
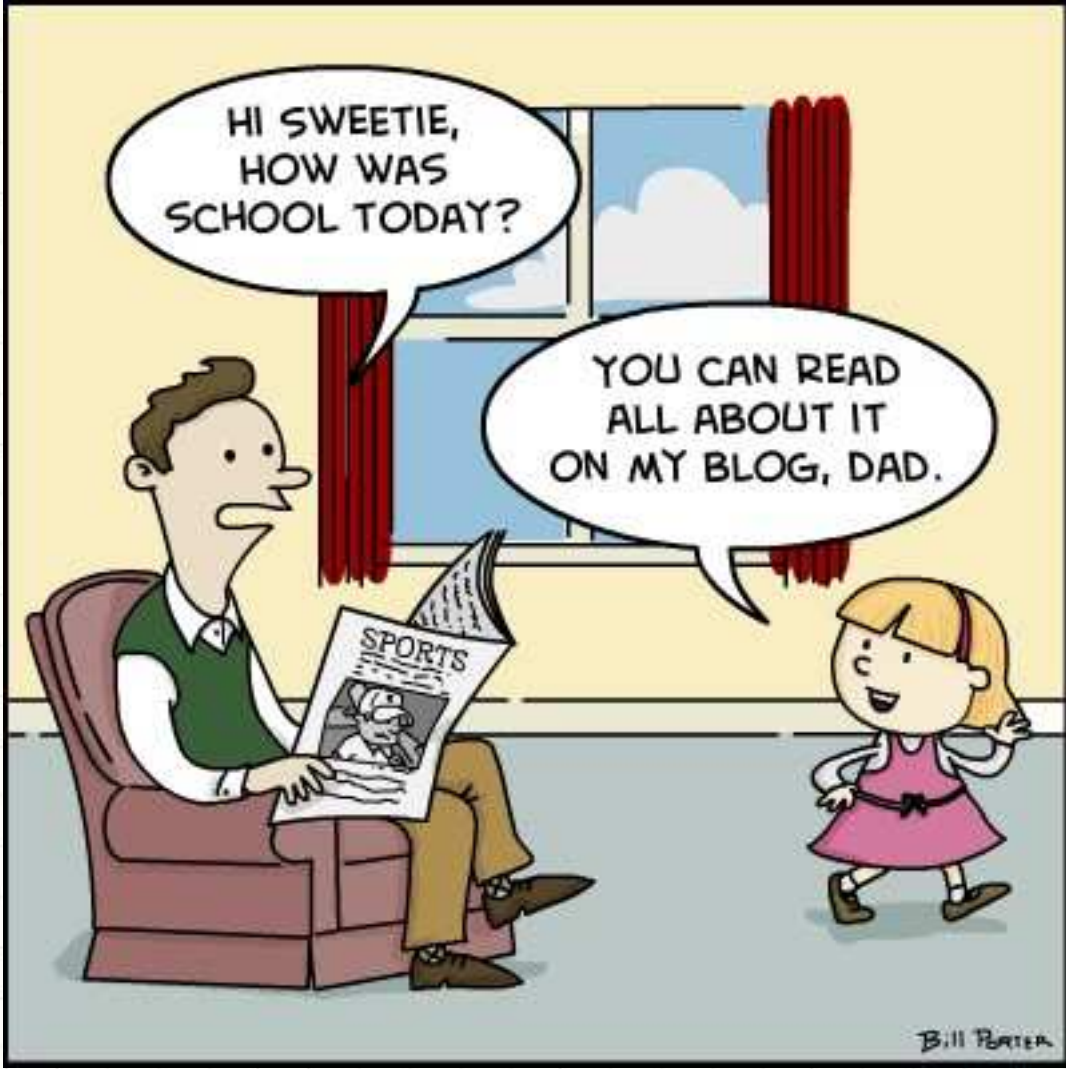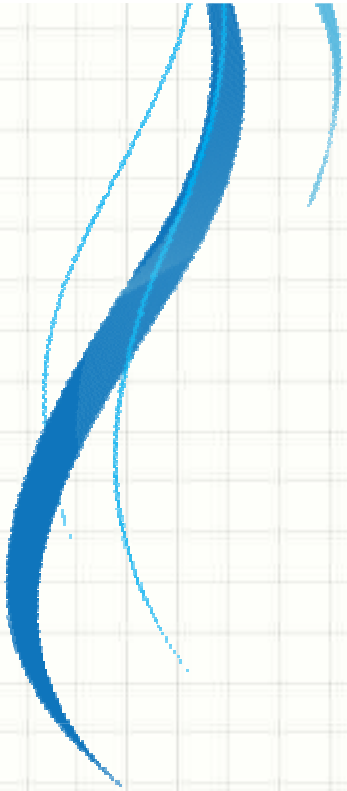
21st Century Fluencies
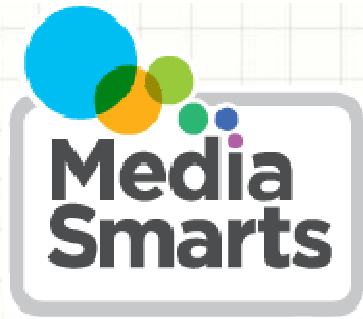
21st Century Fluencies

- **Solve** complex problems in real-time.
- **Think divergently** in both digital and non-digital environments to create novel and useful solutions.
- **Think analytically** by comparing, contrasting, evaluating, synthesizing
- **Collaborate seamlessly** in both physical and virtual spaces.
- **Communicate** not just with text or speech, but in multiple multimedia formats.

GREATEST CHALLENGE

- to move beyond the glitz of the flashy technology and instant social networking to teach true civic literacy in this new milieu

- develop a curriculum for teachers which includes and integrates core information, media and civic literacy competencies and skills, in a logical and systematic information process model

- provide students with essential tools so that they can engage with media and information sources as autonomous and rational young citizens.

Research findings

Students must be

1. **information literate**: access, evaluate, use
2. **lifelong learners**: pursue interests, read, generate knowledge
3. **socially responsible**: uphold democracy, be ethical, cooperate, participate in the governance and democratic processes of their societies
4. **possess basic skills** for critical thinking, to analyze and use media for self-expression and production

Ontario College of Teachers, "Electronic Communication and Social Media –the New Frontiers", 2011
Media Awareness Network, "Digital Literacy in Canada: From Inclusion to Transformation", July 10, 2010
Media Awareness Network, "Young Canadians In a Wired World, Phase III", 2012

Media Smarts
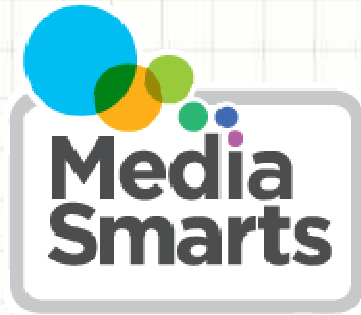
CANADA'S CENTRE FOR DIGITAL AND MEDIA LITERACY

- Online resources for teachers, students and parents addressing media and information literacy issues
- Curriculum-based modules addressing such topics as critical thinking, resource finding and analysis, cyberbullying, ethics, internet safety, social networking, privacy, evaluation of websites

http://mediasmarts.ca/digital-media-literacy-fundamentals

Implementation- Constructivist

- Select approach for guiding student research within a curriculum-based framework
  - inquiry-based learning
  - project-based learning
  - problem-based learning
  - scientific enquiry
  - case study
  - cooperative learning
  - simulations
  - production
- Focus on the specific skills required to effectively find, use and share information
- Address ethical issues
- Apply critical and divergent thinking skills
- An end to teaching by "telling,"
- Technology becomes a tool that students use for learning essential skills and "getting things done"

CONCLUSION

The principal task for educators and librarians is to teach young minds in relevant and innovative ways how to deal with ideas not just data … and how to evaluate and analyze, then apply, and synthesize these new ideas into knowledge.

If we teach students the tools of critical thinking we will create socially responsible, politically aware digital citizens.

"Give me the tools that open my mind and heart and make me think, and you give me a chance to change the world!"

Resources

- John Seely Brown, "Growing Up Digital," *Change*, vol. 32, no. 2 (March/April 2000), pp. 10–11, http://www.aahe.org/change/digital.pdf
- Peter Grunwald, "Key Technology Trends: Excerpts from New Survey Research Findings," Exploring the Digital Generation, Educational Technology, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C., September 23–24, 2003
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- Kate Manuel, *Teaching Information Literacy to Generation Y* (New York: Haworth Press, 2002), https://www.haworthpress.com/store/ArticleAbstract.asp?ID=32857
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- Diana G. Oblinger and James L. Oblinger, Editors, "Educating the Net Generation", EDUCAUSE; Published: February 2005; HTML and PDF formats, http://www.educause.edu/educatingthenetgen
- Marc Prensky, "Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants, Part II: Do They Really Think Differently? "*On the Horizon*, vol. 9, no. 6 (December 2001), pp. 15–24; available from http://www.marcprensky.com/writing/.
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- Marc Prensky, *Teaching Digital Natives: Partnering for Real Learning* (Corwin , 2010)
- Larry D. Rosen, PhD **,** *REWIRED: REWIRED: Understanding the iGeneration and the Way They Learn* (2010) and *Me, MySpace and I: Parenting the Net Generation* (2007);
- Larry D. Rosen, PhD , **REWIRED:** *Reading on a Kindle or iPad is NOT Reading … So, They Say … Maybe it is Better* posted, July 18, 2010, http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/rewired-the-psychology-technology/201007/reading-kindle-or-ipad-is-not-reading-so-they-say-mayb
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- Media Awareness Network, "Young Canadians In a Wired World, Phase III", 2012

EPILOGUE

" A new Canadian political party wants to move the House of Commons to cyberspace. [It] is gearing up to fight in two coming byelections.

The Online Party of Canada registered with Elections Canada and presented its platform on Wednesday.

The virtual House would let average Canadians table new bills and draft policies."

Metronews.ca, Thursday August 2, 2012