

Article on digital safety:

Introduction: Why Digital Safety?

Body: What made me do this at age 15? How did you come over BIK?

Body: How did you come up with flash cards as your product? How will this benefit the student community?

Conclude with the summary of all the points.

In the twenty-first century, we live in two societies; The one where we meet people physically and that too occasionally. Whereas, in other societies we can be connected to anyone and anytime, this is called the digital society which includes a significant proportion of children and Adolescents. Moreover, this society even includes a few limiting factors, one of which is going to be discussed in this article. The limiting factor is the concerns pertaining to the digital safety of children aged between 8-18. The 2024 reports of the Safe Online Global Report record the disastrous safety failures in digital society: 218% CSAM(Child Sexual Abuse Material) surge, 1325 percent AI child abuse surge moreover with 1 out of 8 school children sexually exploited online demanding immediate regulatory need. This report suggests an urgent need for the safety of children online.

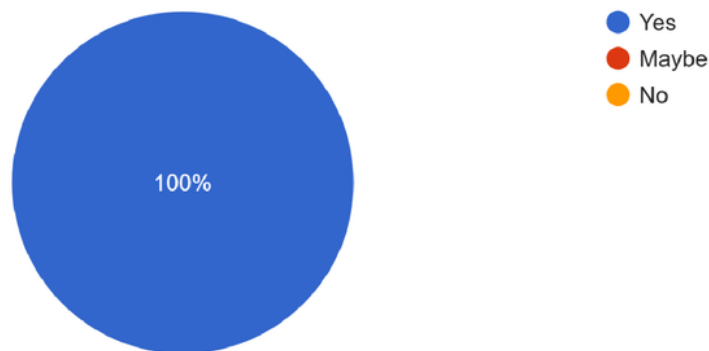
My work on digital safety started when I was researching the DPDP(Digital Personal Data Protection) Act (Legislation in India) as part of a debate I was preparing for. While making notes on the Act and considering the recent incidents of cyber attacks, I wondered if there are protections for children online like their parents being their data principal, and ban on targeted advertisements on teenage accounts, but are the children completely aware about handling their personal information and be digitally safe? The answer is no, children lack adequate literacy for handling their personal information and staying digitally safe. DQ Institute of Online Safety Index (2020, 145K children across 30 countries): 60% face cyber risks like oversharing due to poor privacy awareness. Another Report titled as Save the children Global Report shows 66% of children aged between 8-18 interact daily with online strangers despite knowing basic risks, which shows lack of application of privacy knowledge. And this is the reason that made me work on this problem by the age of 15. Additionally, I also researched one more legislation named as DSA(Digital Services Act) of the European Union. Through this source, I explored more about the BIK(Better Internet for Kids) initiative of the European Union which became one of the major sources for my journey on my research about digital safety.

Based on my research, I gained a detailed understanding on digital safety and the limitations pertaining to it. When I was brainstorming about the solutions with my mentor, I came up with an unique approach of making flash cards which will cover the main aspects of the limiting factors of digital society.

The flash cards contained questions that promoted critical thinking, Self analysis, and decision making. The questions are segregated into sections (Privacy and Consent, digital footprint, Self control and online behavior, Advertisement and influence, Awareness on exploitation, Decision and Responsibility and exclusive section for children from grade 8th to 12th) where the students are put into scenarios like in the question "If someone you don't know online asks to be friends, what steps should you take before deciding?" to make the target audience think critically, do self analysis, and make a decision about their action, this will not only make children digitally literate and careful, but also can help them develop 21st century skills. Moreover, the approach of my product (flash cards) helps the children to become a responsible global citizen. It can be clearly evident that my product supports the student community by helping them get literate by developing core skills for becoming successful. After the development of my product, I went a step ahead to present my work to the people through an exhibition and gave them a survey form, where their response to my questions were:

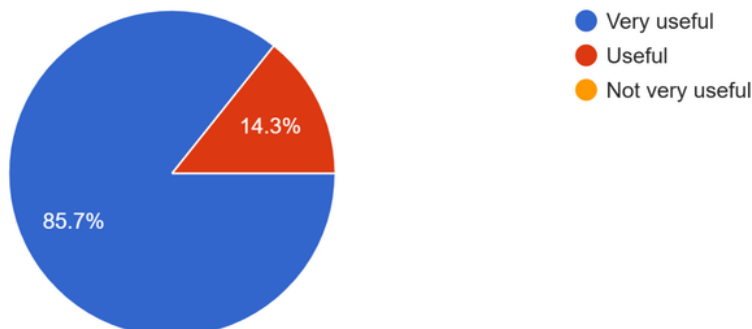
Would you personally use or recommend this solution?

7 responses



How useful is the proposed solution/product for improving digital safety?

7 responses



In conclusion, digital safety has limitations that can lead to devastating outcomes. Children are not completely aware about how to handle their personal information. Instances like the dismantling of Kidflix, the Blue whale are clearly evident to it. Moreover, to address this limitation, many governing bodies like the European Union and the Government of India used the approach of law, while there still needs to be an unique approach that can help mitigate the issue by bringing digital literacy among school children. The product created by me brings in digital literacy among children by using questions that represent a scenario in which a student has to make a decision where they will challenge their ability to think critically and decision making skills. The product also has a section suggesting ways the cards can be used by the School counsellors, examples include Role plays on any question representing a scenario which ends with a final explanation on what is a safe choice.

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