



THE NOMINET DIGITAL CITIZEN BADGE

An introduction to the Scouts' new badge



NOMINET | **Scouts** 



We know that the world is changing fast. Over the last 20 years our relationship with technology has changed beyond all measure. This happened with the introduction of the internet into everyday life but accelerated with the mass adoption of the mobile phone and the dominance of social media in our daily interactions.

Digital Citizenship has therefore become an incredibly important topic currently focused on ensuring young people are safe and responsible online.

'Digital Citizenship' is a concept that has evolved rapidly over the past couple of decades, and continues to do so. The label is often attached to lists of topics and outcomes without being clearly defined in its own right. Most influential models emphasise the cultivation of individual responsibility to steer a safe path through the potential harms

created by the internet and digital technology, without creating new ones of your own.

To the extent that existing models of Digital Citizenship widen out to embrace more positive perspectives on the possibilities of digital, they focus on individuals flourishing through the acquisition of digital skills. In recent years, there has been an increased focus on digital rights alongside responsibilities.

When the Scouts partnered with Nominet to review the existing Digital Citizen badge, we took a step back from the existing badge curriculum and began exploring what changes would be needed to make it fit for purpose in today's environment. The Scout movement has over 400,000 youth members. It is the largest youth movement in the UK and it was therefore important that we focus not just on digital tasks and skills but those that are gained elsewhere too for a more holistic learning experience

The result is a four-month study, carried out by digital research agency Unthinkable, into what it means to be a Digital Citizen in 2019.

We found that existing models of Digital Citizenship tend to treat the internet as a self-sufficient domain. As such, the digital skills considered within these frameworks concern mastery of technology in its own right. Similarly, to the extent that the concept of citizenship plays a part in current frameworks of Digital Citizenship, it is generally not connected with older or wider concepts of citizenship in the physical world. Popular terminology that contrasts 'virtual' with 'real' (e.g. 'in real life' or 'IRL') obscures the fact that, particularly for children and young people, digital and physical are intertwined and equally real.

In a nutshell, for those who have grown up in a society that is digital by default, the separation of digital and real world doesn't exist.



As a result, the badge's new curriculum, to be launched in the Autumn, is now being developed with the Scout movement to:

- Look for ways to present Digital Citizenship that are both distinctive and in keeping with the **Scouts' purpose and values** that isn't duplicating what young people are learning elsewhere already
- Ensure the badge is **Citizenship-first**, not digital-first: build a curriculum that equips young people for confident participation in the civic sphere
- Base the curriculum on the **real life needs, goals and aspirations** of children and young people and explore how digital technologies can help scouts address these goals and live their lives more fully
- Be **Place-based**: Digital Citizenship should equip children and young people to be active citizens of the place where they live, not just of the internet as a separate domain

The Scouts now intend to work to create a set of educational resources that are relevant and engaging for Scouts groups in order to achieve the outcomes set out in this report.

For more information:
fundraising.scouts.org.uk/nominet

WHAT SCOUTS THINK:

"It is important that young people find out about Digital Citizenship because it is important for us to know what we are actually sharing and what can be done with it! We could be sharing and developing elderly people's digital knowledge by showing them the internet world! It could help them keep in touch with their friends!"

Ashley, A Scout

"Digital is part of Scouts' lives now, so scouting needs to be there to accompany them. We're there to teach them how to be better people and digital is part of that."

Carl, A Scout Volunteer

"As a movement, we need to foster the resourcefulness and skills of young people; we need to give them the tools – not the answers."

Chris, A Scout Volunteer

