

# Chapter 15

## The Ethical Use of Online Content in Teaching and Learning

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### ABSTRACT

*The inclusion of online resources and multimedia elements into instruction is often times misunderstood or unknown to teachers who want to design more engaging and interactive learning experiences for their students. This chapter explores the legal and illegal use of images, video, and written sources found online. Examples of ethical uses of online resources will demonstrate how to correctly incorporate and cite resources, apps, and multimedia into ethics-focused lessons. Students can choose from multiple means of demonstrating their knowledge in the collaborative learning experiences. Online resources that will assist teachers and students in the application of ethical and correct application of attribution are identified. These sites are good beginnings to deeper learning about this important component of digital literacy.*

### INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, K-12 educators have taught in a “closed system,” also referred to as teaching in a silo (with little or no collegial collaboration) model in that a teacher, along with an instructor’s version of a textbook for lesson content and activities were the primary sources of what was discussed and learned by students throughout the school year (Fullan & Langworthy, 2014). Occasionally, a lesson developed by a teacher included a static visual resource to help students “see” and understand concepts or procedures. Or perhaps an educational film was shown to enhance the learning experience by incorporating sight and sound to further student understanding. Students were not exposed or connected to outside resources or content experts who could provide much more relevant information than the teacher. This was not a shortcoming of the teacher, it was simply that supplemental media resources were not available beyond audio and film-based resources. Thus, this closed system of information was controlled by the teacher and/or the textbook publisher. Digital-based resources began to make their way into classrooms in the 1990s.

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The year 2000 has been used as a virtual marker for many changes throughout society. In education, one of these symbols for change and new beginnings was the K-12 student. As Marc Prensky (2001) identified in his landmark paper: *Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants*, on the whole, students in the early days of the twenty-first century were the first generation of learners who were surrounded by, and interacted with digital technology in their everyday lives such as playing computer games, connecting with friends via email or instant messaging on their cell phones. Educators began to close the gap between themselves and their “digital native” students as more and more teachers embraced digital tools into their instructional program (Helsper & Eynon, 2009). While students and adults who were fluent using technology tools in their personal lives, education was not as fast, or agile enough to keep pace until broadband became more ubiquitous in schools. The integration of technology in lesson design and delivery accelerated as schools integrated new digital tools such as laptops, smartphones, and tablets into their instructional programs. In a 2010 study funded by the United States Chamber of Commerce, it was noted that “broadband-enabled educational tools enable more interactive, personalized instruction, which has been found to improve learning outcomes” (Davidson & Santorelli, 2010, p. 32). With this ever-increasing access to online resources, the amount of information available to students and teachers requires users to follow ethical practices of acknowledging the creative work of authors who share their work on the web for the benefit of sharing knowledge and experiences on a global scale.

This chapter identifies basic copyright policies according to legal guidelines and practices for education purposes. K-12 Student and Educator Standards that pertain to ethical practices of Digital Citizens acquiring and using media resources in student and teacher generated products are included. Direct internet links to pertinent organizations and online resources are provided as guides to more detailed information on the range of permissible use for the types of artifacts and resources that can be incorporated into teacher instructional materials or student-created projects, papers, or other forms of demonstrating knowledge on particular topics. All links that are provided are active at the time of this publication. These sites are starting points for teachers and students in their own journey to becoming active creators employing ethical practices.

## **BACKGROUND**

Students absorb, observe, and learn from actions of their teachers. This is not only true in the context of lessons and assignments, but also from observing teacher behaviors and daily practices in consistent procedures and classroom management. Students notice how their teacher interacts with them, their classmates, with other teachers, and in the look and feel of the classroom environment itself (Regan, 2012). Consistently modeling ethical choices through acknowledging the work of others is the starting point for teaching the tenets of intellectual property, copyright, and fair use. An opportune place to start in class is with lesson support-presentations and the need for attribution on any portion of a slide that consists of materials from a source other than what the teacher has created. There are specific guidelines to follow each form of media-based products. A class discussion on the importance of ethical choices for acknowledging the work of others can flow from the presentation itself.

The disconnect between traditional instruction and the rapidly growing amount of rich educational resources available on the web allowed teachers and students to move beyond classroom walls in their learning experiences. At the same time, the gap between digital natives and immigrants began to close with more and more teachers delivering technology-embedded learning experiences in their classrooms

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