NCDIT | NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

North Carolina Digital Skills Standards

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North Carolina Digital Skills Standards

Overview

The N.C. Department of Information Technology's (NCDIT) Office of Digital Opportunity is focused on closing the digital divide for all North Carolina residents and in every facet of daily life. Whether accessing healthcare, pursuing workforce opportunities, responding to natural disasters or engaging in civic life, residents must be equipped with the infrastructure and skills to participate fully in a digitally connected world.

The Office of Digital Opportunity supports a range of initiatives aimed at expanding access to high-speed internet, increasing the affordability of connectivity and devices, and providing meaningful digital skills training. This work is essential to support every North Carolinian with the tools and competencies necessary to thrive in today's economy and society.

A key component of this work is defining what it means to be digitally prepared. Recognizing that digital access alone is not enough, this project introduces the North Carolina Digital Skills Standards, a statewide framework that identifies the essential knowledge and abilities residents need to engage in civic, economic, and social life.



The visual on the right identifies the six key areas of focus:

1. Digital Identity
2. Digital Wellbeing
3. Digital Relationships
4. Digital Safety
5. Digital Reasoning
6. Digital Futures

Roadmap of Collaboration

In fall 2024, the N.C. Department of Information Technology's Office of Digital Opportunity partnered with the William and Ida Friday Institute for Educational Innovation, part of North Carolina State University's College of Education, to begin a landscape study of digital skills and literacy needs across the state.

As part of these efforts, researchers conducted interviews with several state agencies, including the Department of Commerce, the Department of Public Instruction, the Department of Adult Correction, the N.C. Assistive Technology Program, and the North Carolina Community College System. The team also engaged **Digital Navigators**[1] and representatives from community-based organizations that provide digital skills training and digital navigation services to North Carolina residents.

Additionally, the team reviewed digital skills frameworks from other states and national organizations to identify common themes and promising practices. Drawing on this multi-faceted approach, the team developed a customized set of Digital Skills Standards tailored to the unique needs of North Carolina residents. At each stage of development, the team met with collaborators from throughout North Carolina to gather input and feedback. This collaborative process centered the voices and needs of North Carolina communities.

These published standards are the starting point for developing Digital Skills courses for North Carolina residents. As a next step, an online learning course will be developed for all North Carolina residents to explore and build capacity in each of the six standards. Digital Navigators across the state will be trained to use these materials when working with residents across the state before they are fully launched in 2026.

Project Timeline

Fall 2024
Conducted a landscape study on digital literacy and digital navigators

Winter 2024
Interviewed organizations and agencies across North Carolina

January-April 2025
Proposed topic areas; developed structures; drafted content

Fall 2025
Publish state's Digital Literacy Standards and Digital Navigator Best Practices

Fall 2025
Design and pilot online courses for Digital Literacy Standards

Winter 2025
Launch online courses statewide; facilitate digital navigator training

Spring-Winter 2026
Revise materials and expand programming

[1] Digital Navigators are trained individuals who work directly with residents and serve as "trusted guides who assist community members with personalized, individualized support for accessing affordable and appropriate connectivity, devices, and digital skills." (NDIA)

Digital Foundations

Across communities and organizations, terms such as digital literacy and digital skills are often used interchangeably, but they can reflect distinct concepts that help clarify the scope and depth of digital participation. While terminology may vary, the shared intent is clear: to support residents in developing the knowledge and abilities needed to thrive in a connected society.



Foundational digital skills are an important first step toward digital literacy, and they represent the beginning of fully accessing the digital world. Skills such as turning on a device, navigating the internet, using email, or understanding basic computer functions are essential for residents to begin engaging with the digital world. These foundational skills serve as the entry point for accessing the broader NC Digital Skills Standards.

For example, the **Digital Identity** standard includes understanding how to manage one's online presence and make informed choices about personal information. However, before individuals can make these decisions, they need foundational abilities such as turning on a device, connecting to the internet, and logging in. Without these baseline skills, individuals may be unable to access the platforms, tools, or settings where digital identity is shaped and maintained. Digital foundations should be viewed as the building blocks that support and enable deeper digital skills development across all six standards.

Many community organizations across the state offer support and tailored instruction from trusted resources such as those listed below. Importantly, many of these high-quality resources are freely available or offered at low cost, helping to remove barriers to digital learning and support a more inclusive digital future for all residents.

Resources to Support Digital Foundations

- AARP Senior Planet
- CABI Digital Skills Resources
- Connectia Spanish Resources
- Digital Learn.org
- Digital Skills Library
- GCF Global Learn Free
- Google Applied Digital Skills Training
- IBM Skills Build
- Microsoft AI Skills Resources
- Microsoft Cybersecurity Skills Resources
- Microsoft Skills for In Demand Jobs
- Microsoft Sustainability Skills Resources
- Mozilla Foundation
- NorthStar
- NorthStar External Resources
- Tech Life Unity

Themes Throughout the Standards

Embedded within the North Carolina Digital Skills Standards are the abilities to communicate and create in digital environments, as well as considerations around privacy in online interactions. Whether navigating online safety or managing a digital identity, individuals must be equipped to consume digital content and actively participate through meaningful expression and interaction. Likewise, individuals should consider their personal privacy and the privacy of others when making decisions online. These standards are designed to incorporate communication, creation and privacy as they are increasingly expected in both formal and informal settings.

Digital Communication

Digital Communication involves the ability to interact effectively, respectfully, and responsibly through digital channels. Individuals should understand the appropriate forms of communication across different platforms like email, social media, video conferencing, etc. Strong digital communication also requires critical thinking about tone, audience, accessibility, and privacy.

Digital Creation

Digital Creation refers to the ability to produce original content using digital tools (writing blog posts, recording videos, designing presentations, or other forms of content). This skill empowers individuals to share their ideas and shape digital spaces with purpose and creativity.

Privacy

In our connected world, privacy concerns are an important part of online life. From settings on digital platforms to posts and other information shared on websites, privacy touches nearly every part of digital interactions. Individuals should consider the information they share and the permissions they accept when online. These behaviors help maintain or better secure their individual privacy and responsibility.

Together, Digital Communication, Digital Creation and Privacy serve as skills that bring the North Carolina Digital Skills Standards to life. They allow individuals to engage more fully and authentically, to express themselves with clarity and confidence, and contribute meaningfully to digital communities. Embedding these practices within each standard ensures that digital skills are not just about understanding the digital world but also about participating in and shaping it.

Digital Skills Standards and Digital Skills

This document outlines six Digital Skills Standards to help North Carolina residents master essential digital competencies. Each Standard represents a broad area of knowledge, while the Skills included with each of the standards are the specific abilities required for mastery. While some skills are actionable, other skills may reflect attitudes, mindset or understandings. The chart below further clarifies the distinction between a Standard and a Skill.

Digital Skills Standards	Digital Skills
Digital Skills Standards organize essential learning across domains of knowledge to help individuals develop their capacity to navigate their digital world.	Digital Skills describe the range of abilities, tasks, or behaviors that reflect an individual's understanding and application of the digital standards.

Each of the Digital Skills Standards includes a range of three to four Digital Skills. Often these skills build upon the order in which they are presented. For example, the **Digital Safety** standard includes four skills that develop residents' understanding from one skill to the next.

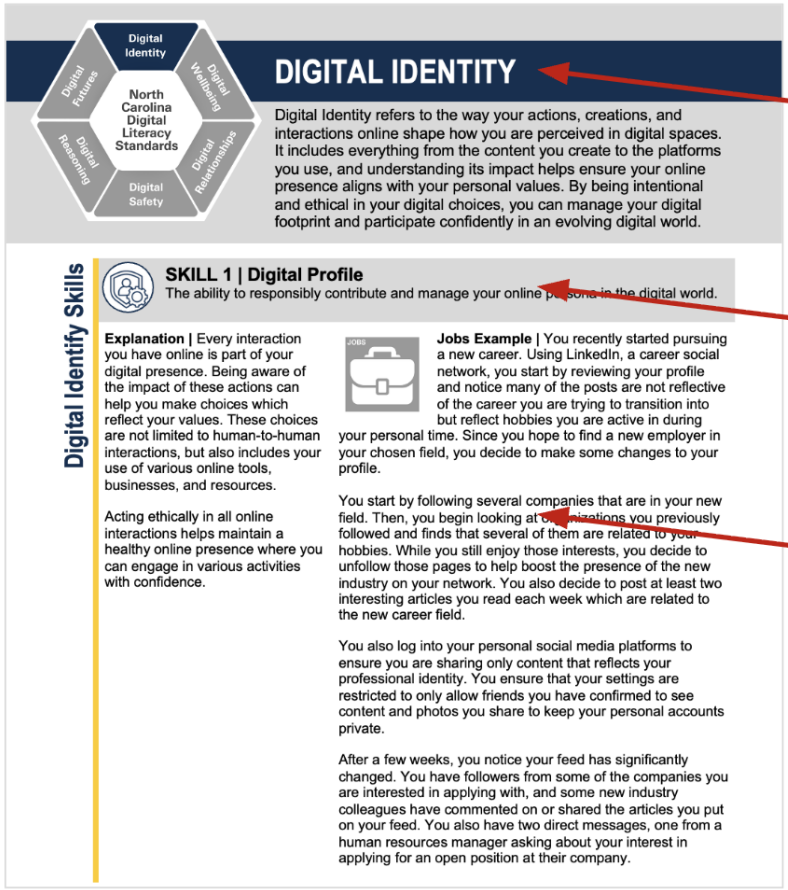
- **Internet Safety** is the first skill where residents focus on safe use of online resources and networks.
- Next, they explore **Data and Device Protection** to ensure their personal devices and information are safe.
- The third skill is **Online Threat Awareness**, which uses the learning from the first two skills to help residents understand threats from dangerous online interactions.
- Finally, **Scam Awareness** combines all these skills to ensure residents have the knowledge and ability to detect scams when using their devices online.

Together, these standards and skills outline the essential skills, knowledge and learning residents need to be fully engaged in digital life in North Carolina.

Structure of the Document

Each Digital Skills Standard is presented using a consistent and accessible format to offer clarity and details about each area. This structure is intended to provide a clear roadmap for implementation across learning environments, community-based programs and statewide initiatives so each standard is actionable and aspirational.

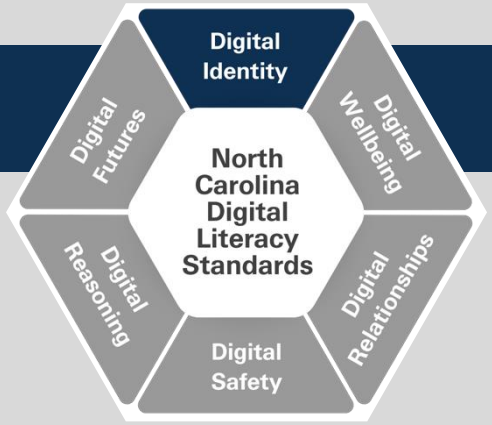
- Each section begins with the name of the standard and a brief description explaining the relevance and significance of the standard.
- Each standard includes digital skills to identify the abilities and behaviors individuals need to demonstrate. These are action-oriented and designed to build a well-rounded, practical explanation of this work in action.
- The name of the standard appears on the first page, accompanied by a general description of what that standard means in the life of a North Carolina resident. There are three to four supporting skills for each standard, applying the abilities residents need to attain a comprehensive understanding.



Included with each skill is an example of how individuals may experience or encounter the need for this skill in their daily lives.

To make these skills concrete, each is paired with real-world examples of civic engagement in North Carolina. The examples reflect five key aspects of daily life: (1) Education, (2) Essential Services, (3) Healthcare, (4) Jobs, and (5) Social and Civic Life. The chart below offers a closer look at how these areas come together and identified the icons used throughout the document to indicate the type of example.

Education	Essential Services	Healthcare	Jobs	Social Life
				
Activities involving K–12 schools, community colleges, and universities, including communication, enrollment or learning opportunities.	Interactions with community and government entities such as libraries, senior centers, the Department of Motor Vehicles, and e-Courts.	Actions to maintain or improve physical and mental health, including telehealth visits, accessing patient portals, managing medical records, and secure communication with providers.	Training and skill development for the workforce, along with the use of everyday workplace tools and activities essential for job performance, career advancement, and employment readiness.	Engagement with friends, neighbors, and community members for civic, recreational, or cooperative activities.



DIGITAL IDENTITY

Digital Identity refers to the way your actions, creations, and interactions online shape how you are perceived in digital spaces. It includes everything from the content you create to the platforms you use, and understanding its impact helps ensure your online presence aligns with your personal values. By being intentional and ethical in your digital choices, you can manage your digital footprint and participate confidently in an evolving digital world.

Digital Identify Skills

SKILL 1 | Digital Profile

The ability to responsibly contribute and manage your online persona in the digital world.

Explanation | Every interaction you have online is part of your digital presence. Being aware of the impact of these actions can help you make choices which reflect your values. These choices are not limited to human-to-human interactions, but also include your use of various online tools, businesses, and resources.

Acting ethically in all online interactions helps maintain a healthy online presence where you can engage in various activities with confidence.



Jobs Example | You recently started pursuing a new career. Using LinkedIn, a career social network, you start by reviewing your profile and notice many of the posts are not reflective of the career you are trying to transition into but reflect hobbies you are active in during your personal time. Since you hope to find a new employer in your chosen field, you decide to make some changes to your profile.

You start by following several companies that are in your new field. Then, you begin looking at organizations you previously followed and find that several of them are related to your hobbies. While you still enjoy those interests, you decide to unfollow those pages to help boost the presence of the new industry on your network. You also decide to post at least two interesting articles you read each week which are related to the new career field.

You also log into your personal social media platforms to ensure you are sharing only content that reflects your professional identity. You ensure that your settings are restricted to only allow friends you have confirmed to see content and photos you share to keep your personal accounts private.

After a few weeks, you notice your feed has significantly changed. You have followers from some of the companies you are interested in applying to, and some new industry colleagues have commented on or shared the articles you put on your feed. You also have two direct messages, one from a human resources manager asking about your interest in applying for an open position at their company.

SKILL 2 | Digital Self

The ability to understand that you are actively creating in the digital space.

Explanation | Part of your digital identity comes from everything you create online. Digital creation comes in many forms, from posting comments on news articles, to interacting with others on social media, to generating or curating your own content online. Developing your digital creator identity means understanding that technology steadily changes. Likewise, ways in which content is created also evolve with technology. Creating material which reflects your values develops a digital identity that aligns with your personal identity. Each creation accumulates to develop your digital identity.



Social and Civic Life Example | You attended a party with friends and took several photos throughout the event. You decide to share the photos of your friends and family at the party on a social media platform, tagging several of them in the images.

Once something is shared online, it becomes difficult to control who sees the image or information. Sharing images on social media can often open you up to a broader audience, even beyond the friends you might intend. Tagging other individuals means the audience grows even further. These images can be viewed by others with little or no context. Being a mindful digital creator means considering what you are sharing, who else might be impacted by what you are sharing, and the settings you have in place for privacy control.

Being aware of the ways in which your digital identity can be shaped by the content you share can help you responsibly curate information you wish to share and information which should remain private.

SKILL 3 | Digital Footprint Management

The ability to understand and manage your online data, activity, and other information trail to maintain a positive digital reputation.

Explanation | Your digital footprint is the overall presence you create online through your creation, interaction, and online use. Your information is unique to you. You can imagine it as the trail of data you leave online each time you use any tool, website, or other online platform.

Being aware of your digital footprint can help you manage it responsibly. Understanding each interaction or transaction leaves information which can be connected to you can help you determine which tools and platforms you might want to interact with and how you can monitor your privacy and security settings to help understand what information is available and to whom.



Social and Civic Life Example | During an autumn football game two rival high school teams sought to win the season championship. Both teams put their best efforts forward leading to a close score throughout the game. However, the game was upended when a key player from the visiting team was injured in the third quarter and the visiting team lost momentum, leading the home team to victory. During the weekend, players from the home team posted pictures of their celebration of the rivalry win, using profane language and calling the other team names. They also mocked the injured player and questioned whether he was really injured. The posts gained traction in local social media channels with several other students and even some adults liking and sharing the material. Other residents commented that it was inappropriate for student athletes to behave in such a manner.

On Monday morning, several players were called into the principal's office to meet with school administrators and coaches. Even though students posted from their personal devices, they were responsible as representatives of the school on an athletic team. When administrators began to take a further look at student social media profiles, they saw a pattern of inappropriate behavior from players representing themselves as members of the school team.

The digital footprint for the players, the collected interactions and presence each person developed online, demonstrated they were not being responsible student athletes and had broken the code of conduct. Sharing, posting, or liking materials online adds to your digital footprint, showing others what values you embrace online. These choices can have consequences, both in your digital life and beyond.



DIGITAL WELLBEING

As our lives become increasingly connected, understanding how your digital habits—such as screen time, social media use, and constant connectivity—affect your emotional balance, sleep, focus, and overall wellness is essential. This skill involves cultivating healthy routines, recognizing when technology use becomes harmful, and setting boundaries that preserve personal privacy while still fostering meaningful online interactions. Developing your Digital Wellbeing is critical to achieving a balanced, intentional relationship with technology in daily life.

Digital Wellbeing Skills

SKILL 1 | Balanced Use of Technology

The ability to manage your life both online and offline in a balanced way by exercising self-control to manage screen-time, multitasking, and engagement with digital media and devices.

Explanation | Opportunities to connect and engage online are nearly everywhere, so balancing technology use with tech-free activities is important for a healthy digital life. Being intentional about when and how you use technology and when you step away from the devices helps support balance. Strategies like screen time management might help you understand patterns in your technology use.

Evaluate the times you most often use technology. Then, create habits that help you be intentional during the day like device-free mealtimes, designated tech-free spaces, or charging your phone outside of the bedroom when you sleep. Consider when you first access devices in the morning and establish a tech curfew in the evening.



Jobs Example | Swoosh! The sound of a new email lands in your inbox. B-b-bing! A direct notification pops up from your team chat app. You're trying to finalize an important report, but before you can get back to your spreadsheet, a red circle appears on your project management tool, alerting you to a minor task update.

In today's connected workplace, these kinds of digital interruptions are constant. Technology is essential for collaboration, alerting us to project changes and messages from colleagues. Some of these are urgent, but many could wait. As a balanced user of technology, you decide to use the tools available on your work computer to better prioritize the interruptions to your focus.

By adjusting the notification settings on your apps, setting your chat status to "Focusing," and blocking out dedicated work time on your calendar, you are in control of the alerts that are important and can silence the rest until you are ready for them.

Over the next several days, you notice your attention is less fragmented because your desktop chimes less frequently. You realize you can complete that important report without constant interruptions. You also feel less pressure to respond instantly to every message, allowing you to leave work feeling accomplished and less mentally drained by the end of the day.

SKILL 2 | Healthy Use of Technology

The ability to understand the benefits and risks of technology on your mental and physical health and to use technology while prioritizing overall well-being.

Explanation | Technology has transformed our lives in many ways. Understanding the benefits of using technology as well as the possible risks to our physical and mental health that can come from increased screen time and digital connection is important. Recognizing these impacts helps you make choices that protect both your mental and physical health.

As you work toward a healthy balance of technology use, you may notice how technology affects your mood, concentration, and stress levels. Take steps to prevent physical strain, such as following the 20-20-20 rule for eye health (after 20 minutes of use, look 20 feet away for 20 seconds) or by setting up an ergonomic workspace. Pay attention to signs of overuse like disrupted sleep, social isolation or increased anxiety and work to adjust your habits. Monitor areas prone to overuse or addiction, such as social media or gaming, and practice strategies for moderation. Many technological devices have built in features or applications that can remind you to take breaks and put down the device.



Healthcare Example | Technology use is ingrained in many aspects of your daily routine. At work during the day, you use a computer to enter data, spending three to four hours a day looking at a screen. Every evening, you spend an hour or more on your computer completing assignments and talking with other students online as you work through an online course. During the evening you also use email and social media to keep in touch with friends and family. Lately, you've developed bad headaches after checking email and social media at night. You notice the headaches are worse on days when you spend more time on screens. Your neck and shoulders feel tight, and you're having trouble sleeping.

You know that using technology in healthy ways means paying attention to how much you use it and making changes to protect your physical and mental health. You decide to cut back on email and social media on nights when you work on your course assignments, giving your eyes a break.

At your doctor’s recommendation, you start taking short breaks every 30 minutes to look away from the screen and stretch your neck and shoulders when using a computer.

After a few weeks of these new habits, you notice you feel less stressed when you limit your screen time. Your headaches happen less often, your neck feels better, and you're sleeping more soundly. You realize that small changes in how you use technology can make a big difference in how you feel.

SKILL 3 | Healthy Boundaries

The ability to handle with discretion all personal information shared online to protect your privacy and others' privacy.

Explanation | Part of your wellbeing centers on managing your online life and privacy in ways that protect you. Setting boundaries for what you will and will not share online can help you manage your privacy and keep personal information and details secure. While social media can be helpful for sharing with friends, family, and colleagues, considering the terms and conditions of sharing, and whether information, images, or other content you share might be accessible to a wider audience than you might intend is beneficial. Being cautious with your data will help to protect you and your information from potential harm.

Maintaining personal boundaries with limits on digital sharing can improve your overall digital wellbeing by protecting you from unnecessary risks.



Healthcare Example | You were recently diagnosed with diabetes at a medical appointment and are interested in learning more about lifestyle changes you can make to improve your health. As you search for information, you find a Reddit post with links to an online support group for people living with diabetes. You eagerly join the group, reading many of the posts with meal ideas, exercise tips, and other helpful advice.

You notice people often ask for personal information including recent lab results, information from your medical history, and other private information. Even though you value the information you've received, you feel uncomfortable sharing this information in a public format.

You remember your provider mentioned online resources available through your patient portal. You log in to your secure portal and find a "Digital Care" tab. This section offers resources about your medical conditions, including videos and articles approved by doctors and nurses. You also find an option for an online support group for patients with diabetes which is conducted through the patient portal. Since your portal requires a password for login and your personal information is safeguarded, you feel more confident joining that group.



DIGITAL RELATIONSHIPS

Digital Relationships involve building and maintaining respectful, meaningful connections in online spaces. This skill includes communicating thoughtfully, managing online interactions, and creating a positive digital environment. It also requires understanding the impact of words and actions in virtual settings and fostering empathy, inclusion, and respect in all digital communication.

Digital Relationships Skills



SKILL 1 | Self Awareness

The ability to recognize and manage how your value system and digital competencies fit with your digital environment.

Explanation | The digital world changes quickly, so understanding your personal digital knowledge, skills, abilities, and values to gauge your impact and image in the digital world is important. Being aware of your role as a consumer and contributor in digital platforms means understanding how your actions and interactions reflect your overall values, both on and offline. It also means having a healthy skepticism about people you might not know in your life beyond the computer and how you are interacting with them.

Developing a strong self-awareness in your digital life can help you as you interact with others online. Reflecting on the ways you represent yourself and your values online can improve your ability to relate to others online.



Social and Civic Life Example | You are a fan of a local college basketball team and follow their scores online. You visit several sports websites, some of which allow commenting on articles and social media posts.

Before a big rivalry game, you see a harsh comment on your favorite sports page: "This team is GARBAGE. Can't wait until we destroy you!!!" You respond with what you think is friendly banter: "Let's see how it goes on the court this week! #GOTEAM!" Within minutes, the comments turn nasty. Rival fans call your team "TRASH" and your own team's fans fire back with insults. The thread fills with increasingly aggressive language and personal attacks. You find yourself getting angry and wanting to respond with your own harsh comments.

As you read the hostile exchanges, you notice your heart racing and your mood dropping. You feel frustrated and upset. The negative comments stick in your mind for hours, affecting your focus at work and your interactions with family. You realize you're checking the thread obsessively, feeling worse each time. The constant negativity is creating stress and anxiety that carries over into your real life. You understand that healthy technology use means protecting your emotional health, not just limiting screen time.

You delete your comment and step away from the discussion. You turn off notifications for sports pages and avoid reading comments sections before big games. Instead, you choose to discuss games only with friends and family in person, where conversations stay respectful and fun. You also set boundaries for yourself: no engaging with hostile comments online and taking breaks from social media when sports discussions become too heated. You remind yourself that your mental peace is more important than winning online arguments.

SKILL 2 | Digital Empathy

The ability to be aware of, be sensitive to, and be supportive of your own and others' feelings, needs, and concerns online.

Explanation | The digital world is highly connected and employing digital empathy, or the ability to share and understand the feelings of others when interacting virtually is important. Developing the ability to relate to others' perspectives allows us to consider the wellbeing of others before making choices, posting content, or engaging with other people online.

Using digital empathy means thinking about what we might say to others, or content we might share with others, much like we would do if we were having an offline conversation. It also means considering what others say to you and what their motivations might be. Understanding the needs, concerns, and feelings of others can help us make better choices about the way we relate to others.



Social and Civic Life Example | You join your neighborhood social media group after moving to a new town. Most people share activities happening in the area, the holiday schedule for trash collection, and opportunities for playdates for children. One afternoon, you notice a post from a neighbor you have not met, who uploaded footage from her security camera. The video is of a person walking down the sidewalk at dusk. The neighbor who posted the video includes the caption "WARNING! Sketchy people are in the neighborhood. Make sure you lock your doors!"

You notice a few people have commented below, sharing the original poster's thoughts, saying things like "Why are people just lurking around?" and "Who is this?!?!"

You immediately recognize your new next-door neighbor in the video and comment on the post, letting everyone know this person lives in their community and is out for a walk. You also say they are fantastic neighbors who have made you feel so welcome in your new home. A little later, your next-door neighbor comments, thanking you for your comment, but asking people to consider what they share and the alarming posts they create on the page. He notes, "I was having a rough day and decided to take a walk in the evening to clear my head. Consider your neighbors before you jump to conclusions. Glad I have neighbors who are kind enough to stand up for others."

SKILL 3 | Digital Collaboration

The ability to use technology to effectively communicate and collaborate, including at a distance.

Explanation | In our connected world, clearly communicating to share information or ask questions in different settings is paramount. Using technology to effectively communicate online means understanding how different communication channels operate and how to best gain additional information with those channels. Effective online use also means understanding formal communication channels, like email or private messaging through business or medical apps, as well as informal communication channels like social media.

Online collaboration means working with others toward a common goal through digital channels. To collaborate well, individuals must understand the channel for communication as well as the expectations for themselves and others. Clearly communicating a shared goal is important when collaborating, especially through digital tools and platforms. Online communication also requires understanding the difference between real time communication, like instant messaging systems, and delayed communication, like email.



Essential Services Example | As a volunteer helping residents at the library, you notice many questions are similar. To save time and make your work easier, you decide to create a shared document where everyone can add helpful resources and organize them into different topics.

You invite another volunteer to help and talk to library staff about the idea. Together, you set clear goals and choose simple online tools like Google Docs and group chats. You start by adding resources and using comments to share ideas. When your team grows, you realize quick messages are better for urgent questions, so you switch to a group text for immediate needs.

You make sure everyone knows their role and shares ideas openly. You keep the shared document organized, regularly check that it's secure, and ask for feedback to improve how everyone works together. You also find other library groups doing similar projects and add their links to your document, making it a richer resource.

Using these simple communication and organization tips helps your team work smoothly, share ideas easily, and keep creating helpful resources for your community.

SKILL 4 | Relationship Management

The ability to skillfully manage your online relationships through cooperation, conflict management, and persuasion.

Explanation | Interacting with others online develops relationships between individuals. As with offline relationships at home, school, or work, managing online relationships skillfully to accomplish goals is important. Also consider what other people are sharing online, and why they might be sharing it. This caution is especially true for individuals you do not know offline. While online tools and platforms can be helpful in creating relationships online, considering integrity and motivation when interacting with others is vital.

Understanding how to cooperate and manage conflicts online often relies on many other digital skills, such as digital empathy and self-awareness. Issues like cyberbullying or “trolling” behaviors sometimes happen in online platforms. These negative behaviors often target individuals or groups and aim to harass or harm. By disengaging with bullies or “trolls,” and reporting the behavior to proper channels, you can help yourself and others better manage digital relationships.



Education Example | You are trying to enroll your child in a magnet school program and need to navigate the district's online application system. The process is more complicated to navigate than you anticipated, requiring multiple forms, documentation uploads, and communication with several different offices. You begin by emailing the magnet school coordinator to ask questions about the application requirements and deadlines.

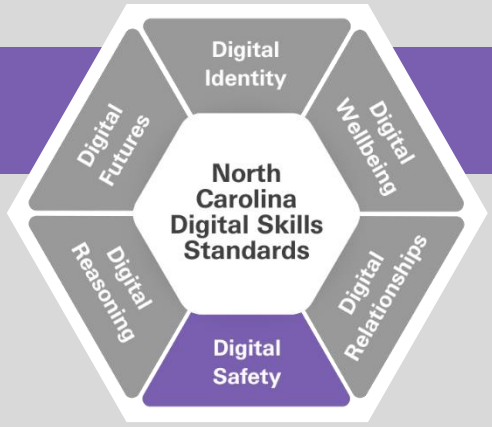
After waiting a week without a response, you follow up politely, copying the main office. The coordinator finally responds but provides conflicting information about what documents are needed compared to what's listed on the website. When you ask for clarification, they seem frustrated and suggest you "figure it out yourself" since "all the information is online."

You decide to take a different approach. You research the district's organizational chart and reach out directly to the magnet program director, explaining your situation professionally and asking for guidance. You also contact other parents through a neighborhood app to see if they've had similar experiences and can share advice.

When communicating with school staff, you keep detailed records of all emails, including dates and responses. You remain patient and respectful, even when staff seem overwhelmed or give incomplete information. You learn to ask specific questions and confirm important details in writing.

After several attempts, you connect with a helpful staff member in the enrollment office who walks you through the correct process via phone and follows up with a clear email summary. You realize that persistence, clear communication, and finding the right contact person are key to navigating bureaucracy successfully.

The experience teaches you that managing relationships with educational institutions online requires patience, organization, and sometimes creative problem-solving to work around system inefficiencies while maintaining professional communication with staff who are often overworked.



DIGITAL SAFETY

Creating safe and secure digital habits is essential for protecting personal information and maintaining privacy online. Digital security involves understanding how to manage privacy settings, avoid common risks, and make smart choices in various digital environments. Practicing digital safety helps individuals navigate the online world with greater confidence and awareness.

Digital Safety Skills

SKILL 1 | Internet Safety

The ability to detect, avoid and manage cyber threats to cloud based digital environments.

Explanation | Your internet connection is the foundation of everything you do online—whether you are browsing the web, checking emails, or using tools like Google Drive or Dropbox to store files. If your connection is not secure, people with harmful intent can try to steal your personal information, break into your accounts, or trick you into clicking on dangerous links.

This competency helps you understand how to safely connect to the internet, avoid risky networks like free public Wi-Fi, and protect your personal information when using online services. Remember, your information is unique and important to who you are and valuable to those who wish to steal it.



Essential Services Example | You are at your local senior center and need to check your email. You see a free Wi-Fi network called “SeniorCenter-FreeWiFi.” It seems convenient, but you are unsure if it is the legitimate Wi-Fi set up by the senior center. Hackers sometimes create fake Wi-Fi networks that look legitimate to trick people into connecting, allowing them to steal passwords, banking details, or personal messages.

Before deciding to use the Wi-Fi network, you remember some information you learned on the National Cybersecurity Alliance website, staysafeonline.org. Asking the staff members at the senior center to verify the network is an easy step to ensure you are using the authentic network.

You use the senior center network for your email, but you decide you need to log into your bank account to verify a deposit. However, you remember advice you read on the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency’s website, cisa.gov, that open, public networks are more vulnerable than your home network. Remembering this, and since you don’t have a VPN available, you decide to wait until you return home to check your bank account.

SKILL 2 | Data and Device Protection

The ability to detect cyber threats (e.g., phishing, scams, malware) against personal data and devices, and to use suitable strategies and protection tools.

Explanation | The internet is an incredibly useful tool, but it is also a place where threat agents try to steal personal information and attack your devices using scams, harmful links, and viruses. If you are not careful, they can trick you into giving away sensitive details like passwords, banking information, or personal data.

This competency helps you recognize the common tricks used by scammers and hackers—such as fake emails, suspicious pop-ups, and fraudulent websites—and teaches simple ways to protect yourself, like using strong passwords, avoiding suspicious links, and keeping your devices updated, including malware detection software.



Healthcare Example | You are checking your email when you see a message that says, “Confirming Medication Shipment.” The email claims your doctor’s office is shipping a new prescription to your house this week. The name of the medical practice seems to be in the email address, but it doesn’t look quite right. You are asked to click a link to confirm shipment of the medication, but there are errors in grammar and spelling, and it did not come from your patient portal.

You know your medical providers usually communicate through your secure patient portal, so you log in to see if there is any communication about the shipment. Seeing no messages from your provider’s office, you decide to use the portal to send a message to ask about the email. A little later, a nurse replies that the email is not from the office and should not be trusted.

This common scam is designed to trick people into giving away personal information like phone numbers, home addresses, and even banking details. Scammers use these tactics to steal identities, install viruses, or drain bank accounts.

To stay safe, never click on links or download attachments in unexpected emails—especially those promising free prizes, urgent warnings, or deals that seem too good to be true. Instead, delete the email, mark it as spam, and/or report it to your email provider or workplace IT team. Reporting these emails helps your inbox recognize similar scams in the future, reducing the chances of receiving them again. If you are unsure whether the email is real, visit the official website of the company supposedly sending the message instead of clicking any links.

SKILL 3 | Online Threat Awareness

The ability to detect cyber threats (e.g., phishing, scams, malware) against personal data and devices and to use suitable strategies and protection tools.

Explanation | The internet connects you with people all over the world, making it easier than ever to communicate and share ideas. While this global connection is an incredible benefit, it also comes with risks. Just like in the real world, some people use online spaces to harass, bully, or stalk others—sometimes even hiding behind fake identities. These threats can make the internet feel unsafe, but you can protect yourself.

Recognizing the warning signs of online harassment, avoiding dangerous interactions, minimizing the impact by updating privacy settings, and taking steps to manage and respond to these risks if they arise are all important parts of online threat awareness.



Social and Civic Life Example | You just started watching a new TV show and decided to join a Facebook group where fans discuss their favorite characters, episodes, and theories. One day, someone in the group privately messages you saying they also love the show and noticed that you live in the same area (since your location is public on your profile). They suggest meeting up to watch the next episode together.

You politely decline, but they keep messaging you, liking and commenting on all your posts, and becoming more persistent. It starts to feel uncomfortable, and you are unsure how to handle the situation. You consider several options on how you might proceed. One critical step is checking and adjusting your privacy settings to protect your peace of mind. You consider who should be able to view your posts and who can see your profile information, making most fields besides your name “friends only.”

You also decide to stop engaging with the person messaging you and block them from contacting you further. You feel reassured with these steps, but you know if the person persists, you can always report their behavior to the platform.

While the internet is a great place to connect, setting boundaries and protecting your personal space online is always your call and necessary—just like it would be in offline life.

SKILL 4 | Scam Awareness

The ability to identify, mitigate, and manage commercial or community cyber-risks online, such as organizational attempts to exploit individuals financially or through ideological persuasion (e.g., embedded marketing, online propaganda, and gambling).

Explanation | On the internet, your attention is just as valuable as your money—sometimes even more. Companies, organizations, and threat agents are constantly trying to capture your interest and influence your decisions, whether through endless ads, misleading sales tactics, or even propaganda designed to shape your opinions. Many of these messages are targeted specifically at you based on what you search for, what you like, and where you spend your time online.

This competency helps you recognize and avoid these hidden risks, giving you the skills to spot manipulative advertising, scams, and online misinformation. You will also learn how to protect yourself using tools like ad blockers and privacy settings to stay in control of what you see and engage with online.



Essential Services Example | Your cell phone pings with an incoming text message. Immediately, you notice it is not a contact, but it looks like a commercial text. The message states you have traveled on the Triangle Expressway recently and need to pay for a toll from your trip. Further, the message states that since you have missed a deadline to pay, failure to pay in the next 48 hours could lead to the loss of your license or the inability to renew your car registration. Included in the message is a link to submit payment for the toll to avoid additional penalties.

You aren't sure if you have been on the Expressway lately but are concerned about the possible consequences. Instead of clicking on this link in the message, you decide to visit the N.C. Department of Transportation website to get additional information. There you learn this text message strategy is a scam being used to target people based on their location. By using a situation which seems credible, they can potentially get access to personal information.

You still want to be certain you do not owe a fee for the toll, so you decide to call the customer service number on the website to ask them to verify the message. After speaking with a representative, you learn the message is a scam. By recognizing these tactics, you can make smarter, more informed decisions instead of being pressured, tricked, or misled by digital manipulation.



DIGITAL REASONING

Navigating today's digital world requires strong reasoning skills to interpret the vast amount of online information we encounter daily. Digital reasoning involves the ability to find, analyze, and evaluate digital content with a critical eye, considering both accuracy and intent. This skill supports ethical decision-making and responsible engagement with media, helping individuals distinguish fact from misinformation and form well-informed opinions.

Digital Reasoning Skills

SKILL 1 | Source Evaluation

The ability to find, organize, analyze, and evaluate media and information with critical reasoning.

Explanation | In the digital world, information comes from many directions. Understanding who is creating information, how the information was generated, and why they are sharing the information is an important part of critically evaluating digital content. Online platforms have different reasons for creating messages. It is not always easy to tell if information is meant to inform, entertain, or persuade the audience. If you are uncertain about content you read or see online, investigating further to see if additional evidence in trusted locations supports the information shared can be helpful.

Online content includes the messages, information, images, and experiences we interact with regularly. Today, anyone can create and post information, and digital tools make it increasingly easy to manipulate that information. Critical reasoning skills help individuals check the credibility and reliability of the information presented. Establishing a set of trusted sources for information can prevent you from sharing misinformation further.



Essential Services Example | There was a severe storm in your hometown, and you are worried about storm damage. You check your social media account to see if any of your friends have posted updates. While no one has directly shared photos or information, you see a post stating "EXTREME DEVASTATION!!!!" You click on the link and notice it is not from a news station or another source you are familiar with, but photos of homes destroyed have been posted. You also notice several people from your hometown have shared the link, making it seem that the pictures are from the storm.

You take a second look at the information on the linked page and do not recognize anything from your hometown. In fact, you cannot be certain where any of the photos were taken.

Instead of relying on questionable social media posts, you decide to check official sources for accurate storm information. You check the North Carolina Emergency Management website (ncem.nc.gov) for official disaster updates and safety information. For local damage reports, you go to your county's emergency management website and check the North Carolina Department of Transportation (ncdot.gov) for real-time road closures and conditions. You also visit ReadyNC.gov, the state's official emergency preparedness website, which provides trusted information during disasters.

You realize that during emergencies it's crucial to verify information through official government sources like the National Weather Service, North Carolina Emergency Management, and local emergency services before sharing or acting on social media posts about disasters.

SKILL 2 | Misinformation Detection

The ability to identify, mitigate, and manage cyber-risks online related to content which is unintentionally incorrect or misleading.

Explanation | Digital tools make it increasingly easy to create or manipulate information. Additionally, sources of misinformation or unintentionally misleading content can often seem factual.

Developing critical reasoning skills specific to online sources, including text, videos, images, and more is important for verifying the facts behind the information presented. Content creators, and/or people sharing content often have personal motivations for sharing, which you may or may not agree with.

Examining the organizations and creators who make and share the content is one way to analyze the credibility of the information source to ensure you can trust what you read or see.



Education Example | Your loved one is a senior in high school and is excited for the future. She has researched all the schools across North Carolina as she makes decisions about what might be right for her.

To help her in her search, you join the **OFFICIAL** East High Seniors Parent Information Page. There are several helpful posts about upcoming dates for senior pictures and links to order graduation announcements, as well as other parents sharing information about the college application process.

A frequent poster in the group claims most students who apply for financial aid at local universities are rejected for admission. Another participant states school counselors are paid extra by some schools to recruit students to apply, so they should not trust these recommendations. Several parents reply that this hasn't been their experience with their older children, but this information makes you feel uncertain about what is legitimate information.

While the group claims it is the "official" parent group for East High School and uses the school's logo as the profile picture, you start to worry about credibility of the group. There is conflicting information, and you aren't sure what to trust.

You decide to check into some of the claims made around financial aid and admissions by visiting the College Foundation of North Carolina at cfnc.org. There, you find reliable information about admissions and financial aid that comes directly from various schools and admissions counselors. You also attend the parent information night hosted in the school's library to speak with college admissions counselors as well as school counselors from the high school.

After the event, you realize it is best to seek out credible sources of information that can be verified, like the individual schools. While online groups can be great for sharing ideas, it is best to verify what you read to ensure it is factual.

SKILL 3 | Disinformation Detection

The ability to identify and evaluate online information (text, graphics and videos) that have been created to cause harm.

Explanation | The internet gives people the freedom to express themselves in many ways, which can be wonderful. However, some people misuse this freedom to spread hateful, misleading, or offensive content. You may come across harmful material in the form of text, images, videos, or even voice messages—sometimes intentionally created to hurt, deceive, or manipulate others.

This skill will help you recognize and reduce your exposure to such content while also providing guidance on how to handle these situations if you do encounter them, whether by avoiding, reporting, or safely responding to harmful online interactions.



Jobs Example | Your friend owns a small business making a special recipe barbecue sauce. She receives a video from a colleague via social media that appears to show a well-known chef announcing a major partnership with a competitor. She notices that the chef's voice sounds slightly off, and their facial expressions seem unnatural. She asks your opinion about the video because she thinks it might be suspicious. You offer to verify the video before she responds to the video, understanding that deepfake videos can be created with AI tools. You first check the chef's official social media account and company press releases. The video is not on any of those accounts. Next, you search the web for the chef's name and the competitor's name. No online announcements exist on any of the search pages. Your research seems to confirm the video is an AI-generated deepfake designed to manipulate people's beliefs. By recognizing the signs of disinformation, you help your friend avoid spreading false information and help alert her network to the deception.

In another instance, your teenage nephew shows you a similar video on a video-sharing app that appears to feature a famous athlete endorsing a questionable product. Drawing from your growing awareness of AI and digital manipulation, you explain how deepfake videos can be used to create realistic but fake endorsements. You show your nephew how to check for inconsistencies, such as unnatural blinking, mismatched audio, and source verification. Through this experience, you are developing a deeper understanding of how disinformation spreads and the importance of verifying digital content before accepting or sharing it.



DIGITAL FUTURES

As technology continues to evolve rapidly, developing the skills needed to engage with new tools and platforms is essential. Digital Futures emphasizes the ability to adapt to emerging technologies, stay informed about trends, and think critically about their impact. This skill supports lifelong learning and prepares individuals to navigate an ever-changing digital landscape with confidence and curiosity.

Digital Futures Skills

SKILL 1 | Digital Resilience

The ability to prepare for emerging technologies and adapt as the technological landscape changes through critically analyzing new tools and technologies to determine how they might improve everyday life.

Explanation | Technology is constantly changing and evolving. Digital resilience is using your digital skills to engage with new technology when new tools are developed. Leveraging problem solving and critical thinking skills allows you to interact with new technologies to find ways to improve your activities for work or your personal life. Digital resilience skills also include asking critical questions to help understand, evaluate, and use technology responsibly.

Another part of digital resilience is finding places to support your personal growth, such as digital navigation services, online courses, and tech support desks.



Essential Services Example | After years of using the same online system, you need to schedule an appointment at your local Social Security office to update your banking information. You go to the Social Security Administration's website - ssa.gov - as you have before but discover the platform has completely changed. The old login process no longer works, and the new system requires you to create a "my Social Security" account with additional verification steps.

The new platform asks for more personal information than before, including your phone number for two-factor authentication. Since you feel unsure about sharing personal information, you decide to use the new "See if you need an appointment" tool. Answering the questions, you learn you might not need an appointment, but you do need to talk with someone. You decide to call the helpdesk number provided on the website to ensure you are making the right choice.

After talking with the Social Security representative, you return to the website and set up your new account. You now understand the necessary security measures, like providing your phone number for two-factor authentication. Logging into your new account, you safely and confidently navigate to "Update your direct deposit" and change your account information.

When the system initially seems confusing, using the resources provided, like the helpdesk and set-up tools on the website, helps you navigate new systems safely and confidently.

SKILL 2 | Data Management

The ability to understand how data is collected and used and how to analyze and apply data in meaningful ways to make informed decisions.

Explanation | Managing data involves understanding how data is collected, organized, and used, and understanding how data can shape how information is interpreted or the story that it appears to tell. By developing the ability to evaluate data sources, question underlying methods, examining privacy policies and terms of use on apps and analyzing how data is presented, individuals can make more informed decisions and avoid being misled by incomplete, biased, or inaccurate information. These skills can help users of apps understand how their data may be used beyond the app itself by third parties. Taking care to limit the information collected and further shared by the app will help to preserve data privacy.

This skill also supports broader digital engagement, from reviewing public health data and understanding online reviews to interpreting survey results. Data management skills help individuals interpret data more accurately, ask better questions, and advocate for how data is used in their communities and daily lives.



Healthcare Example | You purchased a smart watch and started using its fitness tracking app. After a week, you are excited to see insights about your activity levels, sleep quality, and nutrition. The app even sends notifications for possible activities to help with your goals. The watch and app track your pulse, your blood pressure, the noise levels around you, and more. Seeing all the information about your physical wellness in graphs and charts seems informative and helpful.

After a couple of weeks, you begin to investigate the reports created in the app. You realize your data for personal health information is being stored by a company who created the app. While it is interesting to see your progress toward your goals, you are not clear about what the company is doing with your data or with whom they might be sharing it. In fact, they have sent notifications for products they think you might like based on some of the information collected. These notifications usually link to a product or service from their company or another company. They even send you targeted coupons and offers for stores when you are near their locations.

After investigating the app, you choose to limit the information shared with the company, including turning off your location sharing and blood pressure monitoring, since you do not feel comfortable sharing those data points with an unknown audience.

SKILL 3 | Computational Thinking

The ability to solve problems by breaking complex ideas down into smaller parts, recognizing patterns that emerge, and evaluating these ideas to find new approaches through critical thinking.

Explanation | Computational thinking helps individuals approach complex challenges in logical and organized ways. This skill helps individuals analyze situations, test ideas, or evaluate outcomes such as troubleshooting a technical issue, planning a project, or making decisions based on multiple variables.

Computational thinking is often associated with computer science, but it is not limited to coding or programming. It reflects a broader way of thinking that applies to everyday life, including comparing options when making a purchase, managing time efficiently, or organizing a team effort at work. Understanding how systems work, how to structure information clearly, and how to sequence tasks logically are all essential components of computational thinking.



Jobs Example | You notice that your computer hard drive is running out of storage, and your desktop is full of downloads, screenshots, photos, and other files all mixed together. Finding specific files is time-consuming, and saving important files to the cloud feels overwhelming. To start solving the problem, you break the task into smaller parts: deleting unnecessary files, grouping files by topic, renaming or reorganizing them, and deciding where and how to store them long-term.

You begin by scanning through your desktop files and identifying patterns. Recognizing these patterns helps you delete or group files more efficiently. You then create folders based on common categories like “First Quarter Project,” “Green Lake Project,” and “Professional Learning.” You decide to back everything up to cloud storage and set up automatic syncing.

You develop a repeatable process to scan → delete → group → label → store. This step-by-step method makes the large task more manageable and helps you avoid future clutter. You adjust your default download location to “downloads” to reduce desktop clutter and ensure you can work from one location to more quickly organize files.

SKILL 4 | AI Awareness

The ability to recognize, evaluate, and engage with artificial intelligence or “AI” tools and systems in ways that are informed, ethical, and responsible.

Explanation | AI awareness is understanding different types of artificial intelligence such as voice assistants, smart devices and generative tools like chatbots. As AI becomes more integrated in areas like healthcare, education, and work, individuals need to engage with these technologies thoughtfully and confidently.

A big part of understanding AI is knowing how it works. Most AI tools use machine learning, which means they study huge amounts of data to find patterns and make predictions—like how a streaming app recommends shows or how a smart speaker learns to understand your voice.

Generative AI (GenAI) goes a step further by creating new content based on user’s prompts—including writing, images, or music. To use these tools safely and effectively, individuals need to understand how outputs are created, what data may have been used, and what risks or limitations may exist. By sharing data in this manner, the user further trains the tool to “learn” more information. Any information shared with the tool will be incorporated into future answers. Knowing how to write effective prompts, review responses critically, and identify inaccuracies or bias are all key parts of using GenAI responsibly and never share personal information with a free AI tool.



Education Example | Your son is a middle school student taking a language arts class. His teacher informed the students she is trying some new AI tools and she’s looking for insights and feedback from students.

The teacher explained she used AI to help her reorganize and update the rubric for the argumentative writing assignment students are working on. She also stated that she will use an AI program to offer some feedback during the grading process.

Your son wrote an essay arguing for increased funding for the local parks and recreation system as an assignment for his class. He worked hard, getting quotes from members of the community and researching local statistics about levels of funding for surrounding communities.

After submitting his paper to his teacher for grading and feedback, your son is confused with some of the feedback he receives on his draft. While most of the feedback aligns with the rubric, some of the comments talk about things they have never discussed in class. There is also a comment about one of his sources that isn’t related to what is in his paper.

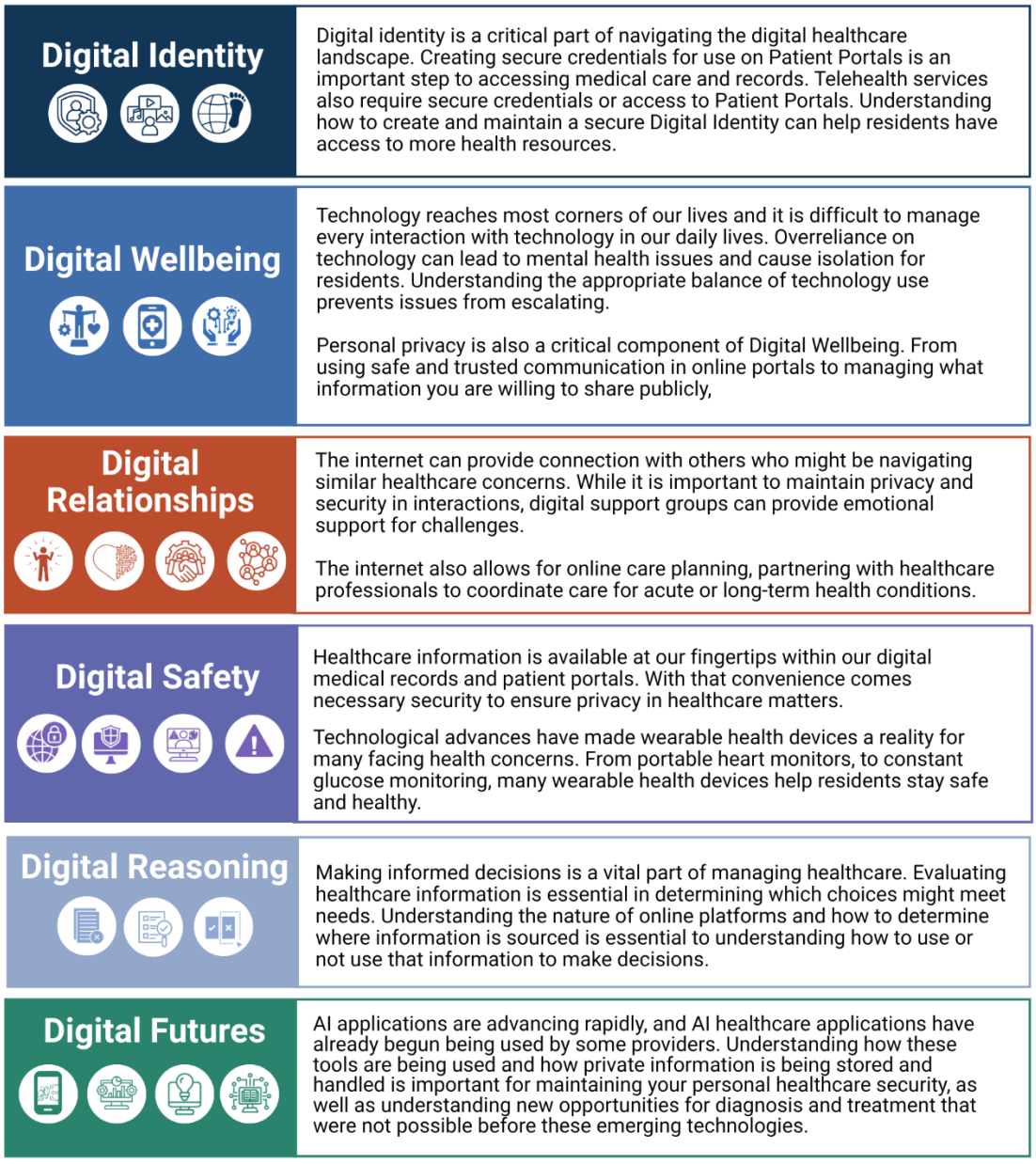
You talk with your son and explain that there are often issues with accuracy and biases that come from using AI tools. Since the teacher stated she wanted feedback on her use of these tools, you and your son make a list of questions to ask the teacher via email.

After sending the email to the teacher, your son comes home the next day and explains the class had a great discussion about the need for human oversight in AI use. The questions you asked about alignment with the rubric and unrelated information helped the students and teacher use specific information to understand the way humans can better adapt and provide additional information when using AI.

This reinforces your understanding that it is important to be aware of the role of AI, and to question and acknowledge the role it plays in our daily lives.

Digital Health Access

The North Carolina Digital Skills Standards are designed to be practical and relevant to the everyday experiences of adult residents. One powerful way to see their value is through the lens of digital health access—ensuring that all individuals have access to the digital tools, skills, and confidence needed to manage their health online. From scheduling appointments and accessing telehealth services to understanding digital health records and protecting personal information, navigating today's healthcare system increasingly requires strong digital skills. The following example illustrates how each of the six standards applies to real-world situations.



Next Steps

The North Carolina Digital Skills Standards represent an important next step in the state's broader commitment to digital opportunities for all residents. The standards provide structure and clarity, but their success will depend on continued investment in local partnerships, adult education, and accessible, high-quality learning experiences for implementation across the state.

Additional tools, resources, and opportunities for collaboration are in development. Organizations are encouraged to stay connected, share their experiences, and provide their feedback as the work of the North Carolina Digital Skills Standards continues to evolve.

Who to Contact

To learn more, get involved, or bring this work to your community, contact us at digitalopportunity@nc.gov.



Appendix A: Digital Literacy Skills Standards

The North Carolina Digital Skills Standards represents broad areas of knowledge important in digital life. Each Standard is broken into 3-4 skill areas with actionable ways residents can build their digital capacity.

DIGITAL IDENTITY

Digital Identity refers to the way your actions, creations, and interactions online shape how you are perceived in digital spaces. It includes everything from the content you create to the platforms you use, and understanding its impact helps ensure your online presence aligns with your personal values. By being intentional and ethical in your digital choices, you can manage your digital footprint and participate confidently in an evolving digital world.

1. *Digital Profile*
2. *Digital Self*
3. *Digital Footprint Management*

DIGITAL WELLBEING

As our lives become increasingly connected, understanding how your digital habits—such as screen time, social media use, and constant connectivity—affect your emotional balance, sleep, focus, and overall wellness is essential. This skill involves cultivating healthy routines, recognizing when technology use becomes harmful, and setting boundaries that preserve personal privacy while still fostering meaningful online interactions. Developing your Digital Wellbeing is critical to achieving a balanced, intentional relationship with technology in daily life.

1. *Balanced Use of Technology*
2. *Healthy Use of Technology*
3. *Healthy Boundaries*

DIGITAL RELATIONSHIPS

Digital Relationships involve building and maintaining respectful, meaningful connections in online spaces. This skill includes communicating thoughtfully, managing online interactions, and creating a positive digital environment. It also requires understanding the impact of words and actions in virtual settings and fostering empathy, inclusion, and respect in all digital communication.

1. *Self-Awareness*
2. *Digital Empathy*
3. *Digital Collaboration*
4. *Relationship Management*

DIGITAL SAFETY

Creating safe and secure digital habits is essential for protecting personal information and maintaining privacy online. Digital security involves understanding how to manage privacy settings, avoid common risks, and make smart choices in various digital environments. Practicing digital safety helps individuals navigate the online world with greater confidence and awareness.

1. *Internet Safety*
2. *Data and Device Protection*
3. *Online Threat Awareness*
4. *Scam Awareness*

DIGITAL REASONING

Navigating today's digital world requires strong reasoning skills to interpret the vast amount of online information we encounter daily. Digital reasoning involves the ability to find, analyze, and evaluate digital content with a critical eye, considering both accuracy and intent. This skill supports ethical decision-making and responsible engagement with media, helping individuals distinguish fact from misinformation and form well-informed opinions.

1. *Source Evaluation*
2. *Misinformation Detection*
3. *Disinformation Detection*

DIGITAL FUTURES

As technology continues to evolve rapidly, developing the skills needed to engage with new tools and platforms is essential. Digital futures emphasize the ability to adapt to emerging technologies, stay informed about trends, and think critically about their impact. This skill supports lifelong learning and prepares individuals to navigate an ever-changing digital landscape with confidence and curiosity.

1. *Digital Resilience*
2. *Data Management*
3. *Computational Thinking*
4. *AI Awareness*

Appendix B: Acknowledgements and Contributions

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Center for Digital Equity
Digitunity
Downeast Partnership for Children
East Carolina University
Goodwill Industries
Institute for Emerging Issues
Kramden Institute
Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina
MDC Rural Forward
N.C. Assistive Technology Program
N.C. Department of Commerce
N.C. Community College System
N.C. Department of Adult Correction
N.C. Department of Public Instruction
N.C. Division on Aging
N.C. Telehealth Network Association
NC 100
NC State Extension
NC Works Commission
Orange County Literacy Council
Raleigh Digital Inclusion Unit
Right Here, Right Now
State Library of North Carolina
United Way of North Carolina
WinstonNet

Appendix C: Resources and References

Resources and references included in this document are highlighted to support digital skills and digital literacy practices and provide a foundation for the development of the Digital Literacy Standards. Additional resources supporting digital skills work, including a digital skills glossary, are available on the division's website.

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North Carolina Resources

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Tech Resource Finder https://www.ncbroadband.gov/resource-finder

North Carolina Digital Opportunity Survey (Spring 2023) https://www.ncbroadband.gov/surveys/digital-opportunity-survey

NCDIT Division of Broadband and Digital Opportunity https://www.ncbroadband.gov/digital-divide/what-digital-divide

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