INTRODUCTION

Welcome! Digital Bytes is a media-rich, project-based experience that teaches digital citizenship through topical, collaborative activities. Designed for teens (recommended for age 13-18), the Digital Bytes site can be used with afterschool groups as a way to kick off project-based learning initiatives, or teachers can use this student-directed program to take a blended learning approach with one of Common Sense’s K–12 Digital Citizenship lessons (see APPENDIX A). Using Digital Bytes, teens can discover, analyze, and explore what it means to be a digital citizen in today’s tech- and media-rich landscape.

Your Role:

As the facilitator, go through all the steps of each module prior to engaging your teens. You will need to determine how engaged you want to be. Will you simply supervise to make sure teens stay on track, or will you guide the conversation and help them work through the activities? There’s no right answer; you should decide based on what works best for you and your teens and the structure of your program.

Program Overview:

Digital Bytes is designed to engage teens in:

1. media reflection
2. media deconstruction
3. media creation

The thematic Bytes are grouped into four buckets: Innovation, Our Generation, Activism, and Interpretation. A “Byte,” or topical module, has five steps: 1. Reflect, 2. Watch, 3. Discuss, 4. Engage, 5. Share. Each Bytes takes about two hours to complete. However, the media-creation activities can become more involved, depending on teens’ level of engagement. The time to complete the Bytes can be split between class periods or group meetings.

TECH REQUIREMENTS:
• Internet Explorer 9 and above, Chrome, Firefox, Safari
• Windows 7, Vista, and XP, or Mac OS 10.5 or higher
• If possible, make sure Vimeo is not blocked
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BUCKETS</th>
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| Innovation | Copy-Paste Culture  
What’s the difference between being inspired by others’ creative work and copying others’ creative ideas? What crosses the line legally? How about ethically? Teens discuss the fundamental concept of copyright by exploring the gray area of accreditation. |
|           | Entrepreneurship  
What kinds of opportunities and challenges does the Internet bring for young entrepreneurs? Teens explore ways in which young people are starting businesses or creating their own products online. They explore the strategies and tools that can help them responsibly launch their own ideas in the digital world. |
|           | Micro-Lingo  
How has technology changed the way we communicate? Has texting redefined how our brains process information? How has the development of emoticons influenced our emotional ability to connect with others? |
| Interpretation | Online Tracking  
Who is keeping track of what we do online, and why? Teens will learn about data tracking and targeted advertising and analyze how these practices affect people’s privacy. |
|           | Internet Hoaxes  
What happens when an online news story, photo, or video turns out to be a hoax? Teens will explore the importance of media literacy in our 24/7 digital culture, where anyone can create, publish, and share information and anything can go viral. |
|           | News Literacy  
How have new forms of technology changed the skills we need to evaluate and analyze news? Teens will consider techniques on how to be news-literate and how to determine which content is reliable and accurate. |
|           | Selling Out  
How are advertisers and marketers targeting our youth? Teens deconstruct how marketing elements today attempt to get their attention with or without their consent. |
|           | The Power of Likes  
How does showing our preferences online generate data that companies and individuals can use? Teens will explore what exactly happens behind the screen when they like something online and the power their likes have. |
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<th>BUCKETS</th>
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| Our Generation | Would You #YOLO?  
What does #YOLO mean to today’s generation, and what does it have to do with the Internet? Teens discuss how #YOLO plays out online (what happens when you use digital media to “live in the moment”? and how it can impact one’s online reputation or identity. |
|            | Haters and Trolls  
What are the differences among teasing, harassing, cyberbullying, and trolling online? Teens analyze the motives behind, for example, trolling (deliberately provoking or upsetting others online, with the intent of inciting an angry response) and explore how it affects individuals, groups, and entire communities. |
|            | Gender and the Media  
How is one’s perception of oneself shaped by the media? Teens explore how the media perpetuates traditional gender stereotypes and roles and the limitations this puts on a developing self-image. |
|            | Instafamous  
How has social media changed the concept of “celebrity,” and what implications does this have? Teens dive into the complex world of online superstardom and attempt to debunk the myths of the glitz and glamour. |
| Activism   | Step Forward  
What are the advantages of using the Internet to engage people in social causes? What are the limitations? Teens will explore the difference between online activism and slacktivism, a term used to describe “feel-good” actions that seem to support an issue or cause but require minimal effort. |
|            | Movers and Shakers  
How are young people using the Internet to spark social change? Teens will explore how people their own age have used different digital tools and platforms to champion a cause. |
|            | Disconnected  
What does it mean to have a healthy media diet? Teens discuss the pros and cons of our daily connection with our devices and the impact these devices can have on our relationships and self-identity. |
|            | Myselfie, Myself  
Is today’s generation too fixated on getting “likes”? Teens will explore how this fixation affects their day-to-day behavior and determine what their own tipping points are. |
GETTING STARTED

When you are ready to dive into Digital Bytes, have teens go to:
http://digitalbytes.commonsensemedia.org

Teens may choose to work in small groups, with partners, or individually. For inspiration, they may want to view a few of the student-submitted videos before they get started.

Take a byte:

Digital Bytes is set up to be as flexible as you need it to be. You may decide to lead teens to particular topics or set them loose to navigate on their own. The first step is to choose a Byte in one of three ways:

1. Teens can use the filter to choose a role: pioneer, creator, doer, or thinker. They then choose the question that sparks their curiosity.

2. Teens can click on one of the main menu buttons and then choose a Byte by title.

3. Teens can click on the “RANDOM” button to get a Byte served at random.

DIVING IN

There are five steps to each byte: 1. Reflect, 2. Watch, 3. Discuss, 4. Engage, 5. Share. These steps are “gated,” in that teens will need to complete a particular step or press the CONTINUE button in order to move on. Once they’ve completed a step, they can return to previous sections by scrolling up. A progress bar at the top tracks the completion of each step:
STEP 1: Reflect

Teens watch a two- to three-minute video montage, which is a mash-up of news clips and current-events stories all aimed at giving them a taste of the issues and controversies associated with their topic.

**TIP:** If your site blocks Vimeo, you may need to show the videos on your personal device to the whole group. See [APPENDIX B](#).

After watching the video, they will be prompted to reflect on what they learned, what they found surprising, and what they found engaging by answering one of three questions:

1. **What was your biggest takeaway from the video?**
2. **What part of this video stuck with you the most? Why?**
3. **What do you want to know more about? Why?**

Answers can be printed or saved as a PDF, and PDFs can be emailed to you. If teens are sharing devices, they could collaborate on a group answer or each contribute their thoughts.

**TIP:** Keep your eye out for the vocabulary pull tab that is located on the left-hand side of the screen. See [APPENDIX C](#).

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STEP 2: Watch

Teens choose from one of the two case study videos to take a deeper dive into the topic. This media-deconstruction activity will help students formulate their own opinions, learn from one other’s perspectives, and reflect on how the topic applies to their own worlds.
**STEP 3: Discuss**

Each case study video has six associated questions. Teens can watch the video in a group setting, pausing to discuss and debate, or they may want to watch it in its entirety individually and then come together to answer the questions (questions are printable). Ideally, the discussion will relate to their real lives, so consider asking the questions you think might resonate with them as well as encouraging them to ask each other related questions.

**TIP:** To encourage a rich group discussion, you might want to use a collaboration platform, such as Edmodo or TodaysMeet, so teens can record their thoughts, their aha moments, and their questions as they view the case studies.

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**STEP 4: Engage**

Teens choose one of two short media-creation activities. These are meant to act as catalysts for larger project-based learning initiatives. Each activity has suggested digital-production tools, so teens can choose whichever ones they’re most comfortable with or curious about.

Try each of the activities yourself to see where students might need your support and guidance. Feel free to make modifications as necessary. Read reviews of the suggested digital tools on Graphite. Preview each to help guide your teens in their selection and use.

**TIP:** For tools that require usernames and passwords, consider creating a generic account for your group. Check privacy policies carefully.

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**STEP 5: Share**

Encourage teens to capture their work on video either by documenting their learning process or by showcasing their final work in detail.

- Teens could use video-recording devices (for example, smartphones) and create time-lapse videos by a) combining still images (decide how many frames per second; for example, 16 fps = 0.06 seconds per image), or b) speeding up their video with the enhancement or effects tool within a video editor.
- Teens could save digital posters, images, slide shows, and infographics as PDFs. They then could import the PDFs to VoiceThread, Explain Everything, or Educreations to enhance them with text, audio, or visual elements. These tools make it easy to create screencasts, which can be exported as video files. For more information on these tools or instructions on how to use them, visit Graphite.

After sharing with each other, consider having your teens share their projects with Common Sense. Create a group account on YouTube or Vimeo and have teens upload their videos and mark them as public (omit any identifying information). Email us the link at schools@commonsense.org with the subject line “Digital Bytes Video.” Common Sense will choose videos to share on the Digital Bytes site. Teens can view this shared work to inspire further learning. Hopefully they’ll want to “take another Byte,” returning to the main menu.

**TIP:** Before uploading videos, please consider whether you need to obtain parent permission.

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**TAKE ANOTHER BYTE!**
WRAP-UP

Badging:

You can award badges to acknowledge your students’ contributions and learning. Consider how the projects and/or videos show evidence of:

- Collaboration with other team members
- Creativity with new production tools
- Thoughtful work processes
- Connections to the real world
- Critical thinking and reflection on the topic

Then go to the Student Badges page on Common Sense and download the images of the badges your teens have earned. They could be printed and displayed in a common space or shared with others via social media.

Project-Based Learning:
Digital Bytes can be considered “entry events” for project-based learning. Ideally, teens will be encouraged to dive even deeper by crafting an open-ended question about a real-world problem. They then can design and construct their own solutions. Share the graphic organizers in APPENDIX D to support their planning of and reflection on their learning experience. This authentic approach promotes in-depth inquiry and application of concepts in a high-interest, meaningful, and memorable way.

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK!
Send your comments, questions, and suggestions to schools@commonsense.org. We’d love to hear from you and your teens!
DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP & LITERACY CURRICULAR TIES

For a blended-learning approach, consider teaching one of Common Sense Education’s 45-minute Digital Citizenship & Literacy lessons along with a Digital Byte. You may want to use a Byte to introduce teens to a concept or to further a lesson’s learning objectives.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Digital Citizenship Curriculum Grades 6–12</th>
<th>Digital Bytes</th>
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<td>(6-8) Rework, Reuse, Remix</td>
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<td>Entrepreneurship</td>
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<td>(9-12) Digital Life 102</td>
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<td>(6-8) Trillion-Dollar Footprint</td>
<td>Would You #YOLO?</td>
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<td>(6-8) Cyberbullying: Crossing the Line</td>
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<td>(6-8) Identifying High-Quality Sites</td>
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<td>(9-12) Does It Matter Who Has Your Data?</td>
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VIDEO LINKS

If your site blocks Vimeo, you’ll need to figure out a way to show the videos to the whole group. You may be able to secure access on your personal device. In this case, use the links to the Common Sense Education Vimeo channel or the original URLs for the introductory and case study videos. Show the videos to the entire group, and then have them return to the Digital Bytes site to continue.

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### Case Study Videos

You can copy and paste from the Digital Bytes site directly as they are listed below each video thumbnail. We have also included them here for quick and easy reference.

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Digital Bytes Vocabulary for Appendices

#1: Our Generation

Would you #YOLO?

- **Reputation** - The general impression of a person held by others and the public.
- **Identity** - All the factors that make up who you are.
- **Motto** - A sentence, phrase, or word expressing the spirit or guiding principle of a particular person or group.
- **Digital footprint** - All the information online about a person either posted by that person or others, intentionally or unintentionally.
- **Legacy** - Something that is a result of events in the past or that comes from someone in the past.

**Haters and Trolls**

- **Hate speech** - A verbal attack targeting someone because of his or her race, gender, religion, ability, or sexual orientation.
- **Troll** - A person who deliberately posts upsetting or inflammatory messages in an online community.
- **Cyberbullying** - The use of digital media tools such as the Internet and cell phones to deliberately upset or harass someone.
- **Online disinhibition** - When people behave differently online, more aggressively or more candidly, than they would face to face.
- **Controversy** - Public disagreement or debate.

**Gender and The Media**

- **Gender identity** - One’s own knowledge and feelings of gender categorization, such as “male,” “female,” or “transgender.”
- **Sex** - A person’s biological status, which is typically categorized as “male,” “female,” or “intersex” (which involves having sexual organs that do not fit the previous two categories). In other words, sex is what’s in between the legs, and gender is what’s in the head, and they do not necessarily always match!
- **Gender roles** - The set of societal norms that can dictate the types of attitudes, feelings, and behaviors that are considered acceptable or desirable based on a person’s biological or perceived sex.
- **Masculinity** - Behaviors and characteristics typically associated with the male gender.
- **Femininity** - Behaviors and characteristics typically associated with the female gender.
- **Stereotypes** - Widely held and oversimplified images or ideas of a particular type of person or thing. Often used to categorize a group of people.
- **Social construction or construct** - A category, such as race or gender, created and developed by society.
- **Objectification** - The seeing and/or treating of a person, usually a woman, as an object.
- **Sexualization** - When individuals are regarded as sex objects or evaluated in terms of their physical characteristics and sexual qualities.
Instafamous

**Micro-celebrity** - One who gains a mainstream following due to viral Internet distribution.

**Micro-fame** - A celebrity whose fame is relatively narrow in scope and is often short-lasting.

#2: Interpretation

## Online Tracking

**Privacy** - The state of being free from unwelcome or unauthorized intrusion.

**Online tracking** - When companies collect information about you based on your online behavior.

**Filter bubble** - The resulting (and possibly limiting) effect of a website's algorithm selecting content for a user based on that user’s information, such as click behavior, search history, or current location.

**Cookies** - Data files that are stored on your computer when you visit certain websites, which are often used by companies to identify repeat customers and personalize visitors’ experiences.

**Digital footprint** - All the information online about a person either posted by that person or others, intentionally or unintentionally.

## Internet Hoaxes

**Hoax** - An act that is meant to trick or deceive.

**Rumor** - Information or a story that is passed from person to person but has not been proven to be true.

**Prank** - A trick, usually done as a joke.

**Media literacy** - The ability to analyze, evaluate, create, and participate with messages in a variety of formats, from print and video to the Internet.

**Skepticism** - An attitude of doubting the truth of something (such as a claim or statement).

## News Literacy

**News literacy** - The ability to use critical-thinking skills to judge and examine the reliability and credibility of news reports, news outlets, and other information sources.

**Debunk** - To expose false or exaggerated claims.

**Crowdsourcing** - To obtain information or input about a task or project by enlisting the services of a large number of people, either paid or unpaid, typically via the Internet.

**Propaganda** - A type of information in support of a cause that is designed to influence opinion.

**Onus** - One’s duty or responsibility.

**Skeptical** - Having or showing doubt.

## Selling Out

**Commercialization** - The process of using something to make a profit, such as using a holiday to sell holiday-specific services and products.

**Product placement** - When a brand is clearly identifiable and positively portrayed in something other than an ad, such as a video game, movie, music video, or TV show.
**Sponsor** - A person or organization that provides funds for something carried out by another person or organization. For example, when race car drivers are “sponsored” by companies, they are paid to wear uniforms with those companies’ logos during races.

**Brand licensing** - Taking aspects of an organization’s brand -- such as its characters -- and featuring them on another organization’s product. For example, if you see Dora on Band-Aids, that is brand licensing.

**Viral marketing** - A technique that uses social media and other digital means to create rapid and widespread awareness about and interest in a particular brand.

### The Power of Likes

**Demographics** - A portion of the population sharing common characteristics or factors.

**Social currency** - The degree to which customers share a brand or information about a brand with others (definition from Vivaldi Partners Group).

**Personal data** - The identifying data that relates to an individual.

**Hashing** - Generating a value or values from a string of text using a mathematical function.

**Data sharing** - The ability to share the same data resource with multiple applications or users (definition from www.pcmag.com/encyclopedia/term/40842/data-sharing).

**Data mining** - A process used by companies to turn raw data into useful information (definition from www.investopedia.com).

### #3 Activism

**Movers and Shakers**

**Activist** - A person who believes strongly in social or political change and takes part in activities to try to make it happen.

**Social change** - A shift in social norms, cultural values, or behavior patterns.

**Media mogul** - Someone with significant control or ownership of or influence over a large company in mass media.

**Cyberbullying** - The use of digital media tools such as the Internet and cell phones to deliberately upset or harass someone.

**Petition** - A written document that many people sign to show their support of a cause or for a change.

### Step Forward

**Activist** - A person who believes strongly in social or political change and takes part in activities to try to make it happen.

**Slacktivist** - Anyone who does something in support of an issue or a cause that requires minimal personal effort.

**Bystander** - A person who passively stands by and observes without getting involved.

**Upstander** - A person who supports and stands up for someone else.

**Petition** - A written document that many people sign to show their support of a cause or for a change.

### Disconnected

**Phone anxiety** - Nervousness and stress that happens to some people when they’re separated from their phones.

**Disconnect/unplug** - A conscious effort made to spend time away from electronic devices, especially mobile phones.
#4 Innovation

**Copy-Paste Culture**

**Copyright** - A law that protects ownership of and control over the work someone creates, requiring other people to get the creator’s permission before they copy, share or perform that work.

**Innovation** - Something new or different introduced, such as an idea, a process, or a product.

**Remix** - To use an existing creative work and add to it, rearrange it, or mix it with other material to create something new.

**Plagiarism** - Copying, “lifting,” or making slight changes to some or all of someone else’s work and claiming it as one’s own.

**Rotoscopy** - An animation technique in which animators trace over footage, frame by frame, for use in animated films.

**Entrepreneurship**

**Entrepreneurship** - A person who starts a business, usually with considerable initiative and risk.

**Innovation** - Something new or different introduced, such as an idea, a process, or a product.

**Ingenuity** - The quality of being cleverly inventive or resourceful.

**Media mogul** - Someone with significant control or ownership of or influence over a large company in the mass media.

**Business plan** - A formal statement and plan for reaching a set of business goals.

**Micro-Lingo**

**Emoji** - An icon, typically one from the texting keyboard on devices that is used to represent a concept or an idea.

**Emoticon** - A combination of punctuation marks, numbers, and/or letters used to represent a facial expression, such as :) for happy.

**Internet lingo** - A type of slang that people use on digital platforms. Users take elements of their spoken language and change them to form a new version, such as “LOL” for “laugh out loud” or “FOMO” for “fear of missing out.”

**Pareidolia** - The psychological phenomenon that causes a person to see an image of something where it does not actually exist, such as the shape of an animal in a cloud.

**Linguistics** - The study of language, its structure, its usage, and its meaning.

**Empathy** - The ability to understand and feel the emotions of another.
ACTION PLAN

Project name:

Team members:

Driving question
What are you exploring?

Project idea
What do you hope to create?

Main steps
What steps will we take to realize the project?

Three main deliverables
1
2
3

Resources & materials needed
What tool(s) will you use?

What questions jump to mind?
# Project Evaluation

Use this form to evaluate your own process and project. When you are done, have another (peer or instructor) weigh in as well. You can refer to your Action Plan to help evaluate your process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>YOU</th>
<th>ANOTHER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does your project address your driving question?</td>
<td>(circle) 1 2 3 4</td>
<td>(circle) 1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments:</td>
<td>not at all ········ very much</td>
<td>not at all ········ very much</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much did you, as an individual, contribute to the overall project?</td>
<td>(circle) 1 2 3 4</td>
<td>(circle) 1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments:</td>
<td>not at all ········ very much</td>
<td>not at all ········ very much</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Were your main goals met?</td>
<td>(circle) 1 2 3 4</td>
<td>(circle) 1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments:</td>
<td>not at all ········ very much</td>
<td>not at all ········ very much</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did your team work well together throughout the process?</td>
<td>(circle) 1 2 3 4</td>
<td>(circle) 1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments:</td>
<td>not at all ········ very much</td>
<td>not at all ········ very much</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did your final product turn out as you had hoped?</td>
<td>(circle) 1 2 3 4</td>
<td>(circle) 1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments:</td>
<td>not at all ········ very much</td>
<td>not at all ········ very much</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SELF-REFLECTION

Your name:

Team members’ names:

Driving question:

What was your favorite part of the process?

What did you learn in doing this project?

How did you contribute as a team member?

Did your project answer your driving question? (y or n)

What were you surprised by?

What would you do differently next time?