

Inside the Black-box: A path for children rights in a digital connected presence

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Abstract

The current debates about potential risks online tend to emphasize children ‘protection’ but also to empower them to have a voice in the contemporary society. In the actual online landscape, giving the inherent complexity of the interactions that managing one’s identity implies, better results could be achieved if the basic concepts of the underlying interactions are clarified, so that children are able to avoid risks and take knowledgeable decisions. However, fully understanding these concepts can lie beyond the scope of the average citizen’s media literacy, mainly if their technological aspects are to be considered. In this line of thought, citizens (and children) literate on managing their digital identities will be able to navigate, communicate, play and learn online more safely, achieving a more responsible connected presence and protecting their privacy.

In the present paper we give account of a visually oriented encryption learning activity among a group of secondary school students, focusing on their behaviors and attitudes towards managing their digital identity and online presence. As a conclusion, we propose an approach towards children’s appropriation of digital environments and technological underlying processes, in order to better exert their rights to participate, their rights to have privacy and their rights to freedom of expression.

Keywords: Children Rights; Encryption; Digital Security; Digital Identity; Game-based Learning.