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**COMMISSION JEUNESSE
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ETHICS AND CYBERCITIZENSHIP:
A Youth Perspective

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COMMISSION DE L'ÉTHIQUE
EN SCIENCE ET EN TECHNOLOGIE

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What is a CYBERCITIZEN?

For CEST-Jeunesse 2018, a *cybercitizen* is, first, someone who enjoys the rights and freedoms guaranteed by the country in which he or she lives: **freedom of expression**, **right to security**, **right to privacy** and so on. However, these rights and freedoms are sometimes undermined in the digital world.

A *cybercitizen* is also a person who gets information from and interacts with fellow citizens online as a way of **engaging** and **participating** in democratic life.

Lastly, a *cybercitizen* – in addition to having rights and freedoms and being an active member of the community – is someone who embraces, or should embrace, values such as **civility**, **civic-mindedness** and **solidarity**, and expresses those values in his or her online activities.

"How can we make the digital world a public space in which individuals can exercise their rights and fulfil their duties as citizens?"

ESTABLISH MEASURES TO COMBINE FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND QUALITY OF INFORMATION

Freedom of expression and the availability of quality information are key to a healthy democracy. They can be supported or undermined in the digital world with its many platforms, blogs and forums as well as content filtering, trolling and fake news.

While protecting freedom of expression, it is vital that the information produced for the general public be thorough, accurate and relevant, in order to promote critical and objective thinking.

MAKE DIGITAL STAKEHOLDERS ACCOUNTABLE

Commensurate with their capacities, resources and influence, all digital stakeholders share the responsibility to maintain a healthy, respectful climate that encourages citizen engagement in the digital world.

On the one hand, cybercitizens need to learn "cybercivility." On the other hand, digital companies must be more effectively regulated and held accountable for abuses related to their platforms or business models.

PROMOTE INTERNET TRANSPARENCY

There are parts of the Web that we cannot see, including lines of code, information-processing algorithms that determine what is displayed on the platforms, and collected data sets. This hidden side of the digital world raises ethical issues in terms of legitimacy, trust in network managers and software creators, imbalance of power between stakeholders, and user autonomy.

Increased use of free and open-source software is one way to address this lack of transparency and give users the information they need to understand the digital universe in which they operate. It also gives them some control over the technological drivers of their online environment.

PROTECT USER PRIVACY

All users should have access to meaningful and intelligible information regarding the processing, storage, use and dissemination of their personal data. They must have a say in what is being done with their data:

- When downloading and using an application, users should be able to opt out of the collection of data that is not essential or directly related to the application's operation, with no penalty.

- Users should be able to choose the information they share and be able to remove what they have posted, provided there is no obstruction of justice or threat to public safety.

CLOSE THE DIGITAL DIVIDE AND DEVELOP DIGITAL LITERACY

"Digital divide" refers to the inequalities in the capacity to access and contribute to information, knowledge and networks, and to enjoy digital benefits. It is a justice issue. Greater digital literacy would make people less vulnerable because they would be better equipped to understand and deal with the issues associated with Internet usage.

The Government of Quebec needs to implement new ways to strengthen public digital literacy through education.

CEST-Jeunesse 2018 made

8 recommendations

that are set out in its *Ethics and CyberCitizenship: a youth perspective position statement*.

It also submitted a draft *Digital Citizenship Charter*, which is available on the CEST website.

ARE YOU LOOKING FOR ...?

In-depth and accessible position statements on a variety of topics such as nanotechnologies, assisted reproduction, information technologies, Smart Cities, and more...

Thought-provoking consultation material on technological and scientific advances

Teaching material used for the various CEST-Jeunesse editions and the related reports

An introduction to ethics, the issues raised by developments in science and technology, and ways of addressing them

Links to the latest news, events and other ethics resources in science and technology

LOOK NO FURTHER!

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The *Commission de l'éthique en science et en technologie* (CEST) encourages open, diverse and ongoing dialogue on the issues related to developments in science and technology.

Every two years, the CEST holds a youth commission with CÉGEP students on a topic that concerns them, with a view to raising their awareness of ethics and informing public debate with their unique perspective.

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