

## THE IMPACT OF DIGITALISATION ON CITIZENSHIP IN NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

The evolution from social citizenship to digital citizenship is one of the ongoing big events of the 21<sup>st</sup>-century digital revolution. Studies have been concerned with how this evolution influences activities like audience participation, business, health, education, and even everyday life. There are gaps in the literature that have led to different studies about social citizenship and digital citizenship. This study is particularly concerned with breaking down the concept of citizenship in the face of the evolution from social citizenship to digital citizenship, using the qualitative research method. The study uses the technological convergence theory to anchor the ideas within. The study found that digital technology has brought about the democratization of the media by creating channels for participants to get involved in narrative-changing discussions. The recommendations are that present, as well as prospective users of digital technology, must acquire all the viable skills needed for active participation in the digital space; and also, certain conditions must be met before the evolution from social citizenship to digital citizenship can go full circle to reach its full potential.

*Keywords:* Citizenship, Digital Citizenship, Digital Globalization, Media Convergence, Social Citizenship

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## INTRODUCTION

The English word “citizenship” is derived from the word citizen which has the Latin root ‘*civitas*’ (city, state, town, the body of citizens, etc.). In its literal meaning, a citizen dwells in a particular city, town, or state (Iwuagwu, 2018). Citizenship is a concept that has evolved through the ages and continues to do so. Turner (2004) explains that citizenship is a collection of rights and obligations that give an individual a formal legal identity. To qualify as a citizen, an individual must first meet up with the duties and responsibilities that the laws of their community demand, after which he or she can enjoy the rights and privileges that citizenship provides. Citizenship is a status bestowed on those who are full members of a community. All who possess the status are equal with respect to the rights and duties with which the status is endowed (Marshall 1963, p. 87). Heywood (1994) argues that citizenship, therefore, represents a relationship between the individual and the state, in which the two are bound together by reciprocal rights and obligations. In essence, citizenship is not a one-way road but rather, a two-way road (one uphill and the other downhill) that connects the individual to the state and vice versa. Both social citizenship and digital citizenship have been explored by scholars from various fields such as education, communication, psychology, and philosophy. For instance, Marshall (1992) as cited in (Valdivielso, 2005) argues that welfare rights represent a third ‘part’ in the development of citizenship after civil and political rights. It can be argued here that he views civil rights, political rights, and welfare rights as key ingredients of citizenship, which are controlled by institutions such as the courts, the parliament, and the social service system. Though it can be argued that Marshall had earlier laid the foundation for the idea of citizenship and social citizenship, a re-modified and much more broadened definition that captures the modern idea of social citizenship goes as follows:

The modern conception of citizenship as merely a status held under the authority of the state has been contested and broadened to include various political and social struggles of recognition and redistribution as instances of claim-making, and hence, by extension, of citizenship. As

a result, various struggles based upon identity and difference (whether sexual, racial, ethnic, diasporic, ecological, technological, or cosmopolitan) have found new ways of articulating their claims as claims to citizenship understood not simply (sic) as legal status, but as political and social recognition and economic redistribution (Isin and Turner 2003, p. 2).

According to Green (2016), Mossberger, Tolbert, and McNeal (2007) coined the term digital citizenship about the state of having access to the internet that provides equal opportunities for online participation, a digital democracy, human rights, and technical skill. Digital citizenship is a notion that emerged as a result of technological innovations and developments in a globalizing world (Hamutoglu and Unal, 2015). Sancanin (2018) explains that the internet along with digital technologies is rapidly changing our world. It can be said that with the availability of reliable internet services today, all that remains is an electronic, digitally enhanced gadget such as a smartphone, desktop computer, laptop, or tablet to hasten communication and the participatory processes that lead to technological convergence. With the present proliferation of digital technologies and gadgets, it can easily be argued that our digitally interconnected world has become an important part of our everyday existence that cannot be easily ignored or pushed aside. According to Pangrazio and Sefton-Green (2021), digital citizenship is not just about civic responsibilities, but rather how the digital space facilitates new forms of participation. It can however be argued that there are various views about what digital citizenship is, as well as what it is not. Manzuoli et al. (2019) also share this view, they explain that a wide range of perspectives exists regarding what digital citizenship encompasses. The different views on digital citizenship all share certain themes in common and can easily be unified through these themes. Firstly, a digital citizen must be active in both online as well as offline communities, highlighting the delineation of boundaries between the online and offline communities; as the concepts of social citizenship as well as citizenship in general continue to blend and

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evolve with digital citizenship. Secondly, a digital citizen must also have a range of competencies or behaviours that help create a fertile ground for a positive engagement with digital technologies.

According to Littlejohn and Foss (2009, p. 101) “citizenship’s influence in communication theory has been growing for the past two decades because citizenship theory makes manifest the specific ways in which legal and material systems of society shape cultural processes of basic social participation and enfranchisement.” Richardson and Milovidov (2019) explain that a digital citizen is someone who, through the development of a broad range of competencies, can actively, positively, and responsibly engage in both online and offline communities, whether local, national, or global. It is important to note that a digital citizen has to have a broad range of competencies which must also be used positively in both online and offline communities. It is quite clear here, that a digital citizen is not only an active member of an online community but rather an active participant in both online and offline communities. It must also be noted that a digital citizen does not limit his or her influence to a particular geographic location since they must have the ability to engage locally, nationally as well as globally. This study is driven by the need to fill the existing knowledge gap on the subject, add more flesh to the growing body of knowledge, as well as spark academic debates on the evolution from social citizenship to digital citizenship. It explores the concept of digital citizenship in terms of what it implies, and how it shapes our lives. It also looks at how citizenship is being redefined through the ongoing digital revolution, which has subsequently brought about an evolution from social citizenship to digital citizenship. It uses the qualitative method of research, and also offers recommendations.

### **CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION**

Conceptualizing digital citizenship can be tricky, and this is because digital citizenship is a very broad area with so many components. Another issue that comes to mind is the fact that it is easily confused with other closely related concepts, such as online safety and civic responsibility. Digital citizenship is a concept that has evolved through

time and continues to evolve and attract the attention of scholars. Manzuoli et al. (2019) explain that the conceptualizations of digital citizenship are nascent, given that it is not yet fully understood, prompting different researchers (Arif, 2016; Ortega-Gabriel, 2015; Sancho, Hernandez, and Rivera, 2016) to indicate that there is a clear need to continue investigating, expanding and generating academic debates on the topic. Ribble et al. (2004) explain that digital citizenship can be defined as the norms of behaviour concerning technology use. They state that there are nine general areas of behaviour that make up digital citizenship which include etiquette, communication, education, access, commerce, responsibility, rights, safety, and security. This definition shows that certain important behavioural areas qualify the digital citizen as a positive participant in the community, be it online or even offline. Common Sense Media (2009) explains that the emphasis on positive participation comes from the fact that this dynamic new world requires new comprehension and communication skills, as well as new codes of conduct, to ensure that these powerful media and technologies are used responsibly and ethically since most of the interaction in this digital world happens at a distance. Digital citizenship is also defined as follows:

Digital Citizenship may be said to refer to the competent and positive engagement with digital technologies and data (creating, publishing, working, sharing, socializing, investigating, playing, communicating, and learning); participating actively and responsibly (values, skills, attitudes, knowledge and critical understanding) in communities (local, national, global) at all levels (political, economic, social, cultural and intercultural); being involved in a double process of lifelong learning (in formal, informal, non-formal settings) and continuously defending human dignity and all attendant human rights. (The Council of Europe cited in Nascimbeni and Vosloo, 2019, p. 11)

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Rahm (2018) explains that digital citizenship can be regarded as a form of extended citizenship going beyond the nation state. In other words, digital citizenship goes beyond the boundaries of borders, it can even be argued that digital citizenship holds the key to the global village of information, communication, and technology, otherwise known as ICT. A digital citizen is first of all a social citizen, a well-documented member of a particular country on the one hand, and on the other hand a member of the digital community. Valdivielso (2005) explains that social rights in democratic societies have transformed the architecture of the very idea of citizenship, structurally affecting other rights, especially property rights. Soares and Lopes (2020) assert that active citizenship is key for democratic societies. It can therefore be argued that being a social citizen should not in any way impede the digital rights of a citizen, more so if the setting is democratic.

According to Richardson and Milovidov (2019), the contextual principles considered as preconditions for digital citizenship are access to digital technology, basic functional and digital literacy skills as well as a secure technological infrastructure. It can be argued that the preconditions for citizenship, social citizenship, and digital citizenship are different. While citizenship and social citizenship on the one hand demand certain membership requirements such as a national passport, national identity card, and national voter's card as well as certain responsibilities such as political participation and patriotism, digital citizenship on the other hand requires access to digital technologies, digital literacy, and the provision of technological infrastructure. These concepts are however slowly becoming more and more inseparable, as they continue to change and evolve through the influence of one on the other and vice versa. Choi (2016) as cited in (Soares and Lopez, 2020) identified four categories within the concept of digital citizenship, which include ethics, media and information literacy; critical resistance; participation, and engagement. Though social citizenship and digital citizenship are sometimes viewed as two contrasting concepts, there are ways in which the responsibilities, rights, and obligations of citizenship can still have meaning in the digital age. For instance, individuals and

groups can still be protected by law through digital rights (Pangrazio and Sefton-Green, 2021).

According to Valdivielso (2005), social citizenship is frequently viewed in terms of socio-economic rights: rights to socialisation of certain risks thanks to a relative redistribution of wealth through the welfare state, and it is an idea and practice that is currently undergoing substantial reconsideration. Iwuagwu (2018) explains that citizenship as a concept involves an individual's link or relationship with their state or country, in which the person is entitled to legal, social, and political rights, which in turn he owes duties and obligations such as obedience to the laws, payment of taxes, defense of the state and other social responsibilities. It can be further argued that social citizens as opposed to digital citizens, share qualities such as cultural, linguistic, and ideological homogeneity to a certain degree, and are tied to a particular geographic location with physical borders and boundaries that demand certain membership requirements such as national passport, national identity card, national voter's card as well as responsibilities and rights that differentiate them from immigrants. For instance, patriotism as well as rights to political participation and involvement are often based on the citizenship status of the individual in question. Heywood (1994) explains that certain groups within society such as women, ethnic minorities, the poor, and the unemployed, commonly regard themselves as 'second-class citizens' because social disadvantage prevents them from fully participating in the life of the community.

It can also be argued that while this issue is much more common in underdeveloped countries with backward religious and political ideologies that lean towards authoritarianism, immigrants in most countries (whether developed, developing, or under-developed) are not far behind on this list. Bosniak (2006) is of the view that resident aliens who live within a specific community of citizens, do not leave the border behind, it effectively follows them inside the state, denying them many of the rights enjoyed by full citizens, or making their enjoyment less secure. In essence, it can be argued that immigrants and illegal aliens barely enjoy the benefits that normal citizens enjoy, while digital citizens, on the other hand, do not face the same degree of challenges

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arising from having to deal with a physical border, since they are rarely considered as immigrants or illegal aliens on the internet and other digital spaces.

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This study is anchored on the technological convergence theory. Digitization and media is a phenomenon that has been reshaping landscapes over the past two decades or thereabouts (Nordic Information Centre for Media and Communication Research, NORDICOM, 2007). It can be argued here that digitalization and digitization are the major driving forces that have brought convergence to the forefront of the present digital revolution as well as media convergence. This point is shared by Latzer (2013) who is also of the view that digitization is one important part of the convergence phenomenon; one of its enabling factors, and characteristics, as well as the driving force. Kalamar (2015) explains that the development of information communication technology (ICT) represents the formation of a new technological-economic paradigm that brings a series of deep structural cuts to all parts of social life. It is not hard to see that digitization has disrupted social structures, redefined social citizenship, and brought about the rise of a digital citizen.

Silverstone (1995) as cited in (Paul, 2019) argues that convergence has been used to describe the blurry or in other words clear delineation of boundaries between fixed and mobile communication such as broadcast, telephone, mobile, and home networks, media information, and communication and most notably telecommunication, media, and information technology. Jenkins (2006) explains that by convergence, he means the flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries, and the migratory behavior of media audiences who will go almost anywhere in search of the kinds of entertainment experiences they want.

This theory is relevant for this study as it explains how technological advancements and convergence has redefined human relationship and erased human and geographical boundaries which is the thrust of this study.



## **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

### **NETIZENS IN AN ERA OF DIGITALIZATION**

The term 'Netizen' has spread widely since it was first coined. The 21st Century has brought about a technological revolution that has in turn enhanced digitalization and global connectivity through the internet. The internet has broken old barriers, netizens now consider each other as compatriots. Even while physically living in one country, it is easy to be in contact with the wider world through the global computer network (Hauben, and Hauben, 1997). Micheal Hauben and Ronda Hauben as far back as 1995 propounded the concept of "Netizens" which happens to be a portmanteau of the words 'net' and 'citizen'. The word, which was simply a reflection of the early stages of the global evolution from social citizenship to digital citizenship argued that social limitations and conventions no longer prevented potential friendships or partnerships. In this manner "Netizens" can today, meet each other from far and wide as it is also true that they probably would not have met if it were not for the internet or social media. It can be said that with digitalization, the internet now has its citizens, as well as what qualifies them as such. Thus, it can also be argued that the boundaries shattered by the internet and digitalization, also gave birth to the digital citizen.

According to Oxford University Press (2020), as cited in (Lynch, 2021), we live in the information age era, also known as the computer age, the digital age, and the new media age. Mckinsey Global Institute (MGI, 2016) explains that "the world has never been more deeply connected by commerce, communication, and travel than it is today." It is, however, not surprising to see that digitalization is the main reason for this transformation. Digitalization, which is defined largely by flows of data and information, is now considered a new form of globalization. It is also clear to see that the soldiers of the present global digital transformation are the netizens, it can easily be argued that the internet has helped "Netizens", in other words, digital citizens to reach audiences that were once thought of as unreachable, and this reach is not restricted to one area.

According to Hauben and Hauben (1997), today, we are digital citizens not only because we interact with our social and political data-

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driven environment, but also because many aspects of citizenship are being framed as already being digital. Digital citizenship has become the default mode. An example of this in Nigeria is the National Identity Card as well as the much more recent National Identity Number (NIN) being issued to citizens of the country. Folorunso (2019) explains that the strength of globalization depends on transformations and technological advancements in the nature, timing, and efficacy of the internet. Globalization brings about relevant changes regarding how business is done across borders, the flow of economic benefits, and broadening participation (Schiliro, 2020). McKinsey Global Institute (MGI, 2016), argues that the rapidly growing flows of international trade and finance that characterized the 20<sup>th</sup> century have flattened since 2008. Yet globalization is not moving in reverse. It can even be argued that the flow of data and information on a global level is on the rise, which on the one hand is the hallmark of the evolution from social citizenship to digital citizenship.

#### **DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION**

According to Adeyanju and Haruna (2012), political participation refers to the various mechanisms through which the public or citizens express their public views and exercise their influence on the political process. It can be argued that political participation in the digital sense refers to the use of digital tools to enhance or augment political participation in the “real world.” Bakardjieva et al. (2012, p. 1), assert that “with a massive growth in online social networking, digital infrastructures offer citizens new channels for speaking and acting together and thus lower the threshold for involvement in collective action and, eventually, politics.” Pangrazio and Sefton-Green (2021), are also of the view that the rise of the internet has increased opportunities for participation in civic, social, and political life. Ajisafe et al. (2021, p. 1) explain that “since the emergence of ICT or Digitization in the modern world, especially in Africa, the use of social media as channels of communication has found expressions in political, economic, and business aspects of human dealing and engagements.” In essence, it can be argued that digital citizenship and the internet play a vital role in political participation

around the world, and even African countries like Nigeria are not far behind. Madueke et al. (2017) explain that as the world moves from what it used to be to a digital world, Nigeria should not be left in the dark. We should take advantage of the many dividends of technology by using them. It can however be said that the best way of putting the vast array of digital tools to good use is by helping our community to become better, whether through political participation, social activism, or any of the available means.

According to Soares and Lopes (2020, p. 4), "citizenship, community, and participation are changing due to technology and digitalization." Bakardjieva et al. (2012) are also of the view that the debate over the potential of the internet and new media to reinvigorate citizens' participation in politics is no longer a theoretical speculation anymore, it is an acutely practical affair. It can be argued that the days of speculating about the influence of digital citizenship on political participation are over, the question is how much of an influence does digital citizenship have on political participation? At the moment, the answer appears to be that more needs to be done. European Parents Association (EPA) as cited in (Richardson and Milovidov, 2019) asserts that there is a huge overlap between being a citizen in the "real world" and being a "digital citizen." Some people who protest online get a false sense of doing something, and often do not even go to vote in elections. It can be argued that some digital citizens do not even understand that the "real world" and the "virtual world" are not the same thing, and political activism and participation do not end on the internet, and neither do they end on social media sites like Facebook and Twitter. Citizens that want to pursue a genuine cause can be sure of mobilizing the youths to support that cause through social media. The Arab Spring that swept through the Arab countries was mobilized on Twitter and Facebook (Madueke et al., 2017). In essence, it can easily be argued that the 2020 #EndSARS movement which began on Twitter and eventually led to physical protests across Nigeria, provides us with a very good example of political participation, social activism, and political mobilization through the use of digital tools and digital citizenship.

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### **DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP AND COVID-19**

According to International Labour Organization (ILO, 2021), COVID-19 is the most significant health crisis that the world has faced in the past 100 years. The unprecedented global health crisis has brought a sudden shift away from classrooms to alternative modes of learning, training, and assessment in many educational institutions. It can be argued that the COVID-19 pandemic illuminated the importance of having a reasonable level of digital competence in the present digital age that we find ourselves. Whether it is as social citizens or even as digital citizens, we all have particular roles to play in the present digital revolution.

Blankson and Hersher (2021, p. 9) explain that “since the pandemic erupted, we’ve witnessed a digital revolution, with a shift to remote work, e-learning, virtual teaching, and more digital access to services than ever before.” Johannes et al. (2022) also argue that the Lockdown during the COVID-19 pandemic reignited the narrative of overreliance on technology because people were using media much more than previously. The pandemic also provided an opportunity for digitally enhanced technological innovations to be tested in real-life situations: for instance, mobile apps were used for contact tracing in some countries, and according to Muscato (2021), technology offered a way to automate time-honored contact tracing efforts in which public investigators asked patients to retrace their footsteps to trace the exact place where they got infected. It is not surprising to see that COVID-19 brought about a huge disruption that has affected the economic sector, communication, education, entertainment, and health amongst many others. This has also pushed many citizens towards the crest of a strong wave of digital citizenship.

### **DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP AND EDUCATION**

Common Sense Media (2009, p. 1) explains that “Digital Literacy programs are an essential element of media education and involve basic learning tools and a curriculum in critical thinking and creativity.” According to United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as cited in Akudolu et al. (2017) there is a need to prepare learners for the emerging world community through Global

Citizenship Education (GCE), which is the type of Education that acknowledges the role of education in moving beyond the development of knowledge and cognitive skills to build values, soft skills and attitudes among learners that can facilitate international cooperation and promote social transaction. Ribble et al. (2004, p. 8) argue that technology-infused teaching is becoming more commonplace every year. Technology in the classroom is becoming as transparent as the chalkboard and pencil. However, teaching how to use this technology has not grown accordingly. It can be argued that technology is gradually taking over in most sectors and education is also following suit. Some of the issues bedeviling digital citizenship and the adoption of digital technology are the lack of required skills for participation and insufficient teaching on how to use such powerful technologies positively. It can also be argued here that the first step in the adoption of digital technology in the classroom is that of teaching and learning how to use such technology since digital competence itself can only be reached through digital literacy. Digital literacy is defined as follows:

The opportunity and ability to use (or decide not to use) ICTs in ways that allow individuals to obtain benefits and avoid negative outcomes of digital engagement across all domains of everyday life now and in the future. This includes (the understanding of the implication of) using different platforms and devices, skills that can be applied when using these platforms and devices, and the use of various types of content and platforms that allow the individual to achieve a broad range of high-quality outcomes. The London School of Economics (LSE, as cited in Nascimbeni and Vosloo, 2019, p. 11)

It can be said that based on the above statement, it is clear that digital literacy is very important for the beneficial engagement and participation of digital citizens in both online and offline spaces, as it is a tool of great importance in achieving a wide range of positive outcomes. According to the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC, 2020, p. 1), “the Coronavirus

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disease (COVID-19) has caused an unprecedented crisis in all areas. In the field of education, this emergency has led to massive closure of face-to-face activities of educational institutions in more than 190 countries to prevent the spread of the virus and mitigate its impact.” The International Labour Organization (ILO, 2021) argues that the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic-related lockdown and physical distancing measures caused an unprecedented disruption in the provision of education and training while also catalyzing innovation in distance learning. It can be argued that the effect of the closure of face-to-face activities in schools around the world forced a rethink about how 21<sup>st</sup>-century education should be. While education could be seen as an essential service required by social citizens in every society, community, or nation, the pandemic brought disruption to normal classroom activities and highlighted the need for digital citizenship to be taken seriously on a national and global level. It can even be further argued that the existing digital divide probably grew wider with the pandemic, thereby putting the disadvantaged further behind due to a lack of access to digital facilities.

### **DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP AND PRESENT DILEMMAS**

Digital citizenship also comes along with heavy baggage of dilemmas. Ribble (2009) explains that digital citizenship should not only focus on what technology can do but knowing how to use the technology is also very important. Areas such as digital access, digital well-being, digital law, digital rights, and responsibility, are some of the challenging angles of digital citizenship that sometimes affect the life of an average citizen. The social and political aspects of the 2020 #EndSARS movement are an example of political participation and social activism through digital citizenship, which is in turn being fuelled by digitalization and digitization. Digital technology has made it possible for people to get information in real-time and many cases, with digital video evidence. Some of the dilemmas arising from such easily accessible information is the question of channeling such an advantage towards positive causes, and how to control the negative use of such access.

Digital citizenship and digitalization have also boosted social activism, thus protests as we know them are changing in line with digital technology advancements (Ekoh and George, 2021). During the 2020 #EndSARS protests that took place around the country, logistics and planning were all handled online through social media platforms which include Twitter and Facebook, that created a participatory circuit for digital citizens to share, exchange and contribute ideas. The 2020 #EndSARS protests also led to the creation of both digital and non-digital content by participants, some of which included, but were not limited to social media posts, articles, t-shirts, caps, posters, and other paraphernalia that contributed to making it difficult for authorities to neutralize the protests.

In terms of digital access, the big problem is that of shrinking the present digital divide to the barest minimum, there are people with little or no access to digital facilities such as smartphones, computers, and the internet in Nigeria, a situation that reduces digital participation. According to Tarman (2003), access to computers and the internet as well as the facilities to effectively use this technology are becoming increasingly important for full participation in economic, political, and social life. Van Dijk (2017) narrows down the problem of access to three areas, the first being physical access to these facilities, while the next is skills access which can only be solved through digital or media literacy, the last area is the user access which can be measured through the amount of usage time as well as the frequency of usage. Presently, the non-user of digital technologies is positioned outside society and is unable to enact digital citizenship (Rahm, 2018).

One of the pressing issues is that of digital wellness or well-being. According to the Council of Europe, as cited in (Soares and Lopes 2020, p. 15), well-being online refers to “information related to how we feel online, comprising another three digital domains: Ethics and Empathy, Health and Well-being, and E-presence and Communication.” Rad et al. (2021) state that in today’s society where the development of digital technologies is emerging, consideration must be given to the development of individual well-being when it comes to engagement with the digital environment. Ahmad et al. (2021)

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are of the view that factors such as having digital security, digital literacy, and digital health and wellness may minimize a student's chance of getting addicted, cyberbullied, victimized, or harmed as a result of online risk and challenges of being a digital citizen.

In essence, it can be argued here that digital participation has an effect on the well-being of the individual, and one of the issues that affect the individual's well-being is cyberbullying. Another issue is that of overexposure, or addiction. There are also questions about legislation of laws that bother on digital citizenship, such as whether or not our present laws are up to date with our present digital realities. Other issues such as digital rights and responsibilities are sensitive areas that must be given close attention. It is also true that the way big social media sites such as Facebook handle big data and algorithms raises serious ethical questions. A good example of data mismanagement and target marketing through the use of algorithms is the case of the Facebook and Cambridge Analytica scandal in which private data was shared with a third party which opened a can of worms that also begs for urgent legislation.

## **CONCLUSION**

The internet flow as well as digitalization have redefined the concept of citizenship today, bringing about changes in most structures of our society. It can be said that through digitalization, the internet now has its citizens, as well as what qualifies them to be citizens. Thus, it can also be argued that the boundaries shattered by the internet have given birth to the present-day digital citizen. Digital technology has brought about the democratization of the media by creating channels for participants to get involved in narrative-changing discussions. It is now possible for people to get information in real-time and many cases, with digital video evidence. It is therefore not surprising to see that the #EndSARS movement gained visibility and international interest through the use of digital technologies.

Digital citizenship requires a broad range of competencies that must also be used positively in both online and offline communities. Digital citizens are not only active members of the online community,



but they are also active participants in both online and offline communities. It must also be noted that a digital citizen does not limit his or her influence to a particular geographic location since they must have the ability to engage locally, nationally as well as globally.

Digital citizenship is not one feel-good pill, some associated risks and challenges come with it. Some of these risks include but are not restricted to cyberbullying and victimization, cyber security breaches, and even addiction.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this paper the following recommendations are put forward:

1. The Nigerian government should consciously device a well-mapped-out plan towards shrinking the present digital divide, to take full advantage of the present digital revolution as well as the various opportunities that digital citizenship provides.
  2. The Nigerian government should find a way of infusing digital technologies in the classrooms of both primary, secondary, and higher institutions, to harness the boundary-breaking qualities of digital technology.
  3. The Nigerian government should device a means of educating the present, as well as prospective users of digital technology on the importance of acquiring all the viable skills needed for active participation in the digital world.
  4. The Nigerian government should take note of some emerging areas of concern, such as digital wellness, digital security, and digital law, to draw up policies that will counter the present threats that they pose to digital citizens, as well as the threats that are likely to emerge from these areas shortly.
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