

# Young People (Re)conceptualising Digital Citizenship: Constructing Ways of Being and Doing Citizen(ship) 'Online'

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## Abstract

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This thesis explores how meaningful the concept of digital citizenship is to young people in Aotearoa New Zealand. In an increasingly digitally-mediated society, the way young people learn what it means to be a citizen online, and the behaviours consistent with belonging and connecting to digitally-mediated communities, are increasingly important. Digital citizenship, however, is an evolving concept. Digital citizenship arises when the inherent complexity of the notion of ‘citizenship’ intersects with the interrelational spaces offered by digital technologies and as a result makes possible new ways of being a citizen and doing citizen(ship) practices. In education, definitions of digital citizenship construct an ‘ideal’ digital citizen by outlining desired behaviours, dispositions, and skills, which normalise particular ways of being and doing. How meaningful idealised concepts are to young people, and whether definitions align with young people’s understanding of what it means to be a digitally-mediated citizen, has not been fully examined in New Zealand.

To explore how meaningful the concept of digital citizenship is to young people, this thesis operates at a theoretical junction, drawing upon multiple historical conceptualisations of citizenship (see for example, Heater, 2004; Mutch, 2005), understandings of discourses (Foucault, 1972), notions of space and place (Massey, 2005), and Bourdieu’s theory of practice (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), specifically notions of capital and habitus. Taking a qualitative approach, I conducted focus groups and individual interviews with 28 young people, aged between 16 and 25, from diverse backgrounds. The resulting data were analysed using an iterative, inductive approach to explore young people’s meaning-making and ways of being and doing digital citizenship. These findings are presented in four parts that focus upon the way young people defined, shaped, located, and practised their citizenship and digital citizenship.

The findings show that digital citizenship is indeed, “many things to many people” (Vivienne, McCosker, & Johns, 2016, p. 15). While ‘digital citizenship’ was a new term for participants, they drew upon their understandings of citizenship to define digital citizenship as habitus (or ways of being) that, along with digital capital, is embodied through digitally-mediated practices. They located their digital citizen habitus through their sense of belonging and connectedness to places and spaces, and they embodied their digital citizen habitus through practices that reflected their lived realities. For these young people, digital

citizenship was a fluid and nuanced process of digitally-mediated, participatory citizenship practices informed by everyday lived experiences. I argue that, if 'digital citizenship' is to be meaningful for young people, there is a need for educators to recognise young people as experts on their lived realities, to encourage reflection upon taken-for-granted digital practices and spaces, and to highlight the relational aspects of citizenship practices online and offline. While the young people in this study offered definitions of digital citizenship, creating a meaningful and shared concept requires a youth-centric approach that recognises everyday citizenship practices and empowers young people to co-construct ways of being and doing citizen(ship) in digitally-mediated spaces.

**Key words:** digital citizenship; education; New Zealand; young people; young adults; students; habitus; capital; participation; belonging; digital spaces; digital practices

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## Presentations

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

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The concept of what it means to be a citizen and do citizenship, both online and offline, is more important than ever in Aotearoa New Zealand. As I complete this thesis in the wake of the mass shootings in Christchurch, New Zealand on March 15, 2019, the way people use digital technologies, how they interact on social media sites, and the responsibilities of social media platforms to address harmful digital content have taken on greater significance (L. Bennett, 2019, March 25; Cooke, 2019, March 18). Following the events of March 15, New Zealand and France initiated a global campaign that recognises digital spaces transcend national boundaries and aims to address the way social media companies regulate user content. Meanwhile, Australia rapidly passed legislation requiring social media sites to remove “abhorrent violent material” (Associated Press, 2019, April 5), whilst members of the European Union had already developed draft legislation aimed at regulating social media (Sachdeva, 2019, April 11). Though social media sites are now being held accountable for controlling the behaviour of users through legislative means, arguably there is a need to educate individuals in what it means to be and do citizenship practices in digital spaces. Specifically, there is a need to educate young people in notions of ‘digital citizenship’.

Young people face an increasingly digitally-mediated future and are situated at the crossroads of applying ‘digital’ to the concept of ‘citizenship’, and vice versa. Informed by their lived experiences, young people require an educational pathway that acknowledges their meaning-making and clarifies the messy field of the digital spaces that they inhabit. Unfortunately, the concept of ‘digital citizenship’ is complex and contested (Vivienne, McCosker, & Johns, 2016). Digital citizenship arises when the inherent complexity of the notion of ‘citizenship’ intersects with the interrelational spaces offered by digital technologies. Within, and through, these digitally-mediated interrelational spaces, new ways of being citizen and doing citizen(ship) practices are made possible. Yet, historical conceptualisations of citizens as active participants in democratic communities contribute to expectations of citizens in digital spaces (Isin & Ruppert, 2015; McCosker, 2015). As Isin and Ruppert (2015) state, “any attempt at theorizing ‘digital citizens’ ought to begin with the historical figure of the citizen before even shifting focus to the digital” (p. 19).

This thesis begins therefore by exploring the many historical layers of assumptions and meanings underpinning the concept of ‘citizenship’ in order to understand the concept

of ‘digital citizenship’. I argue that in terms of the varied history of citizenship, ‘digital citizenship’ is merely yet another evolution and theorisation of a contested concept.

## 1.1 The Evolution of Citizenship

Citizenship is not a fixed notion. Rather citizenship is polysemic, signifying multiple meanings and open to interpretation in diverse socio-cultural, political, and historical contexts (Baglioni, 2016; Clarke, Coll, Dagnino, & Neveu, 2014; Faulks, 2000; Heater, 2004; Loader, 2007). Historically (see Figure 1-1), what citizenship entails, and who belongs and does not belong as citizen, has been a “highly contested and constantly changing” concept (Isin & Wood, 1999, p. 6). Citizenship has historically encompassed notions of community, connectedness, and belonging formed through commonalities of interest. However, primarily, the concept of citizenship outlines the relationship between an individual and a politically defined geographical region or state. Within this context, citizenship is a status that confers rights upon an individual, as well as duties and obligations of specific practices (Dwyer, 2010, p. 2; Heater, 2004). Thus, the status of citizenship signifies not only who is included, but also who is excluded from this relationship with the state. Over time, the notion of citizenship has been political and subject to variation (Shklar, 1991).

The modern concept of citizenship is generally regarded as originating in the Ancient Greek cities of Athens and Sparta between 600 and 400 BC<sup>1</sup> (Heater, 2004). Citizenship was tied to land ownership (Faulks, 2000), thus connecting citizenship status to ownership of place, whilst excluding denizens, or inhabitants, as well as those who could not be trusted with political participation, such as women, slaves, children, and the elderly (Dwyer, 2010; Faulks, 2000; D. K. Hart & Wright, 1998). However, over time, changing social and political structures shaped the way citizenship was understood, although it continued to remain an unequally awarded status. For instance, during the Roman Empire, citizenship was an awarded status used as a form of social control over conquered populations, that granted limited legal rights whilst imposing obligations to the state, such as paying taxes (Dwyer,

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<sup>1</sup> Although Isin and Wood (1999, p. 6) argue that claiming, “that the Western conception of citizenship originated with the Greeks, is an ‘historicist’ claim where a consonance is assumed between ‘their’ and ‘our’ conception of citizenship”. They argue, therefore, that we should remain sceptical of any noted similarities between historical and modern conceptions of citizenship.



2010; Faulks, 2000; Isin & Wood, 1999; Pocock, 1981). However, by the Middle Ages, the role of the state was diminished, and medieval Europe saw an increased focus on the individual's obligations towards their more immediate community and the Church, along with increasing expectations that citizens would practice citizenship through active participation (Faulks, 2000; Heater, 2004).

<b>A BRIEF HISTORY OF CITIZENSHIP</b>	
<b>Ancient Greece</b>	<p>Citizenship awarded by state, provides limited legal rights and duties and no political agency.</p>
<p>Citizenship status tied to place, with expectations of political participation for the common good.</p>	
<b>Medieval Europe</b>	<p>Citizenship represents a passive status as an identity associated with a nation-state, with rights and responsibilities, including an entitlement to equal treatment for all citizens as a basic right.</p>
<p>Limited citizenship rights due to hierarchical feudal systems. The focus shifts to the individual's obligations towards the community and the Church.</p>	
<b>1950</b>	<p>Citizenship represents a passive status as an identity associated with a nation-state, with rights and responsibilities, including an entitlement to equal treatment for all citizens as a basic right.</p>
<p>T. H. Marshall's Social Model of citizenship extends rights to include social rights. Citizenship is a passive status associated with nation-state, incorporating rights and responsibilities, and recognising citizen as a member of multiple social communities</p>	

**Figure 1-1** Historical Conceptions of Citizenship

Source: Adapted from multiple sources (Dwyer, 2010; Faulks, 2000; D. K. Hart & Wright, 1998; Heater, 1999, 2004; Isin & Wood, 1999; T. H. Marshall, 1950; Pocock, 1981).

In the Seventeenth and Eighteenth centuries, notions of citizenship continued to shift as increasing trade and commerce, a monetised economy, the industrial revolution, and an increasing focus upon capitalism contributed to changing social and political structures in Western societies. Nation-states developed clearer boundaries and citizens looked towards developing political communities to deliver the rights and obligations of citizenship (Faulks, 2000; Heater, 2004). Gradually, and fuelled by philosophical discussions of the relationship between the state and the citizen-individual (Faulks, 2000), citizenship evolved to represent a passive status as an identity associated with a nation-state, and thus an entitlement to equal treatment for all citizens as a basic right (Dwyer, 2010; Faulks, 2000; Isin & Wood, 1999). This view of citizenship as a passive status with associated rights continues in modern conceptions of citizenship.

In 1950, T. H. Marshall posited a new social model of citizenship that focussed upon the rights of the citizen (T. H. Marshall, 1950). Marshall argued that citizens have three forms of rights: civil rights, (or the right to individual freedom), political rights (that allow a citizen to participate within the political system), and ‘social rights’ (T. H. Marshall, 1950). Marshall (1950) argued that social rights encompass the right to basic “economic welfare and security”, as well as the right to fully participate and “live the life of a civilised being according to the standards prevailing in society” (p. 11). In adding social rights as a condition of citizenship, Marshall extended the concept of citizenship beyond the historical realm of civil and political rights. His contribution continues to influence and direct modern understandings (Dwyer, 2010; Faulks, 2000; Giddens, 1982; Isin & Wood, 1999; Turner, 2001), although his model has drawn criticism on several levels.

Marshall’s (1950) notion that citizenship rights is a smooth and sequential progression from basic civil rights, to civil plus political rights, through to adding social rights, has been critiqued (see for instance, Dwyer, 2010; Faulks, 2000; Giddens, 1982; Turner, 2001). Marshall took a decidedly Anglocentric view, formulating his social model of citizenship by examining British and European history. Thus, it is argued that his posited sequence of progressive rights may not necessarily hold true for nation-states that have not experienced the same historical progression of civil, political, economic, and social events (Turner, 2001). Additionally, Marshall does not explain the social mechanisms and divisions at play within society that shape definitions of citizenship (Turner, 2001). Whilst Marshall acknowledges divisions created through social class status, he ignores social divisions such

as race, gender, and age, which have historically been used to refuse citizenship rights to groups of people (Turner, 2001). Instead, Marshall appears to treat citizenship as uniform and does not differentiate between the different forms citizenship has taken within varied contexts (Faulks, 2000; Giddens, 1982; Turner, 2001).

In light of the above summation of citizenship's progression through time, what can we take all this to mean within the New Zealand context? Namely that the evolution of citizen rights in New Zealand has not followed Marshall's (1950) clear progression. Although New Zealand is a former British colony, and the citizenship context may appear similar to that of Britain's, civil, political, and social rights were not evenly applied as New Zealand shifted from the role of colonial outpost and began to develop its own identity. For instance, in 1853 the first New Zealand political elections were held, but 'who' was considered eligible for suffrage was based upon British tradition, which treated the right to vote as a privilege of trust based upon connection to place (Atkinson, 2012). Consequently, only male, British citizens, who were over 21 years old, and who had links to property through individual ownership or lease, were initially allowed to vote in New Zealand elections. Ethnicity, gender, and class status, as well as age, denied many inhabitants equal civil, political, and social rights. Gradually, more groups gained civil and political rights, although the honouring of civil and political rights for Māori is still evolving as New Zealand works to resolve Treaty of Waitangi grievances (Lunt, Spoonley, & Mataira, 2002).

As a result, the New Zealand citizen enjoys civil, political, and social rights due to their status. However, some rights are also available to many non-citizens. For instance, since 1975, permanent residents of New Zealand, have had political and social rights, such as voting rights, and access to social support such as free education or welfare benefits, even though they do not have citizen status. Furthermore, while some social rights, such as economic support, are often restricted to citizens and permanent residents, civil rights, or freedom from interference within the law, are available to all inhabitants and visitors. Notably, however, young New Zealand citizens remain disenfranchised until they are 18 years old, meaning that, citizenship status or not, some are still excluded from some citizenship rights.

As T. H. Marshall (1950) acknowledges, having a citizenship right does not guarantee the ability, or desire, to exercise that right. For instance, despite having political rights to vote, a sizeable proportion of eligible voters in New Zealand (approximately 23%

and 20% at the 2014 and 2017 general elections respectively) do not exercise that right even when enrolled (Electoral Commission New Zealand, n.d.). Often rights may be constrained by financial or other considerations. For instance, all citizens may have the right to utilise the judicial system for redress of a perceived wrong, however, many cannot afford the legal costs associated with doing so. Similarly, those living in New Zealand, for the most part, have the civil ‘right’ to access the internet, providing they are not banned by courts of law for criminal activities, imprisoned, or denied service by internet service providers (ISPs) for various reasons such as failure to pay for services, illegal copyright breaches, and/or nuisance activities such as sending ‘spam’. However, even with the right to do so, some may find their ability to access the internet restricted due to their geographical location (Consumer, 2016, March 9), due to infrastructure limitations, and/or due to personal and familial budgetary constraints (Bascand, 2013; Elliot, 2018). While New Zealand citizens may have universally available rights, inequalities such as socioeconomic status may impair the universal enjoyment of those rights (Dwyer, 2010).

While T. H. Marshall’s (1950) social model adds to the rights of the citizen, he conceptualises a citizen who is still subject of and to the nation-state (Dwyer, 2010). Yet increasingly, legal, political, and social rights (and obligations) are not dependent upon citizenship status. As political and economic shifts move nation-states towards globalisation, the role of the nation-state in ensuring rights and benefits to citizen individuals has diminished. Many citizens leave their nation-state community to “live and work in countries in which they were neither born nor naturalised” (Loader, 2007, p. 6). Populations flow across traditional geographic borders and individuals gain (and lose) rights and obligations across multiple traditional nation-states. For many, the citizen identity increasingly incorporates a range of self-selected identifications with communities of belonging. Internet access and digital communication tools allow individuals to create new global communities that challenge traditional concepts of the citizen as a geographically designated political identity. As a result, individual identification with a nation-state is becoming less important.

## **1.2 Citizenship in the Digital Age**

In recent decades, conceptualisations of citizenship have continued to evolve. As cultural aspects of citizenship have become more important in discussions around belonging and community, some authors have used the term ‘cultural citizenship’ to address the way citizenship encompasses diverse communities and practices (Klaus & Lunenborg, 2012).

Recognising the discursive influences upon ways of being and doing citizen is important, as technology use has become widespread and new citizen practices have become possible. Digital technologies have provided new spaces of interaction between individuals, business interests, governments and other organisations, and governments and businesses have capitalised upon the opportunities offered (Loader, 2007). In online spaces, businesses have co-opted ‘moral’ obligations of citizen behaviour and defined their own expectations through ‘Terms and Conditions’ for service. Meanwhile, governments are increasingly moving towards digital mediation of civil participation and forms of e-government. Underpinning moves towards digitally-mediated interactions is the assumption that digital participation is an available and desired option for many citizens. Potentially, citizenship participation via digitally-mediated spaces may exclude or limit the participation of some groups, such as children and young people.

Young people have historically been excluded from traditional notions of citizenship. When citizenship is understood in terms of democratic and political participation, then young people who are considered too young to vote are excluded from engaging fully in citizenship practices. However, alongside T. H. Marshall’s concept of citizenship as encompassing equal rights, there has been a growing social acknowledgment of the rights of children to belong and participate equally within their communities (UNCRC, 1989, 20 November), which has opened new ways to consider the role of young people as citizens (Baraldi & Cockburn, 2018; Earls, 2011; Hartung, 2017). For instance, young people may be discursively positioned as ‘future’ and ‘becoming’ citizens possessing rights, but little agency, and/or positioned as agentic ‘active’ citizens, participating and contributing to society (Baraldi & Cockburn, 2018; Hartung, 2017). When what counts as active participation is often defined and controlled by adults (Baraldi & Cockburn, 2018), young people’s ways of being and doing citizen are shaped by the ways they are discursively positioned within social contexts.

For young people, learning to be and do citizen now occurs in a social context dominated by the use of digital technologies. Access to the internet, especially social media, has opened the way for new understandings of social interactions and ways of doing youth culture (A. Bennett & Robards, 2014; Hartung, 2017). Young people no longer have to be connected to geographical place to join and engage with communities. Instead, ‘online’ communities may be global in scale and offer the opportunity to join communities built upon

common interest rather than common location. Yet even as technology has increased young people's access to information and multiple communities, traditional expressions of citizen engagement, such as participation in formal political processes, are on the wane. For instance, young New Zealanders under 30 years old are increasingly likely to fail to enrol and turnout to vote in general elections (Vowles, Coffé, & Curtin, 2017). However, young people increasingly engage in acts of political participation via alternative means, such as social media. The Pew Research Center found that in the United States younger people increasingly use online sources, such as social networking sites like Facebook, to access news items and information about their society (Mitchell, Gottfried, Barthel, & Shearer, 2016, 7 July ). For young people, digital technologies have created new online spaces for democracy and participation and new opportunities for ways of being and doing digital citizen.

'Citizenship' is a contested term and so is the concept of 'digital citizenship'. While we might conceive of 'digital citizenship' as the practice of doing 'citizenship' in digitally-mediated spaces, or perhaps doing citizenship using digital technologies, multiple conceptualisations of 'citizenship' make this understanding a broad concept. Does digital citizenship entail civic<sup>2</sup> or democratic participation online? Formal or informal political participation? Is digital citizenship a recognised status that provides worth? As outlined in Chapter 3, education-based definitions of digital citizenship tend to emphasise civil responsibilities to the community whilst ignoring the role of the citizen as a civil and political actor. In doing so, policies around digital citizenship normalise young people as agentic and participatory in digitally-mediated spaces, whilst continuing to ignore the civic and political capacities of young people. In this thesis, I adopt the commonly held understanding of digital citizenship as the norms and values of appropriate technology use with the underlying goal of developing individuals who can fully participate in an

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<sup>2</sup> In this thesis, I use the term 'civic' with regards to engagement and participation for the common good. Civic engagement encompasses the individual's rights and responsibilities as a member of a community. I use the term 'political' in respect to the formal participation in the democratic process (such as electoral participation) and informal actions, such as activism, that seek to influence the democratic process through extra-parliamentary measures. Notably, there may be some overlap between these concepts when 'community' is based upon membership of the nation-state and engaging for the common good may also be considered as a form of political participation. I further note that 'civics' is used as a term by educators to refer to the body of knowledge about how to be a good citizen, including knowledge of the democratic process, as will be covered in Chapter 3.

increasingly technology-mediated society for individual and societal benefit (see Chapter 3).

In New Zealand, the concept of digital citizenship is integrated into the New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007) through the Digital Technologies Strand (Te Kete Ipurangi, n.d.-b). The definition promoted by the New Zealand Ministry of Education to schools has been developed by an independent organisation, Netsafe, and draws upon the core values and competencies of the New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007). Netsafe's model (outlined in Chapter 3) focusses on the skills, attitudes, and behaviours deemed necessary to be a New Zealand digital citizen with no overt mention of civic or political participation. In New Zealand, digital citizenship is therefore more about ways of being and doing digital citizen in digitally-mediated spaces, than it is about political participation per se.

However digital citizenship is defined, embedded in the definition is an assumption that students will desire, and be capable of, engaging as a digital citizen. By outlining the requirements to be a digital citizen a binary is created (Sujon, 2007). To be a digital citizen is to fulfil and do certain citizenship practices, such as participating “in educational, cultural, and economic activities” (Netsafe, 2015, September 16). However, for those who are unable, or unwilling, to participate due to life circumstances and/or accessibility issues, this definition and binary constructs the non-participant as ‘not a good citizen’, potentially fuelling the very disenfranchisement that citizenship education aims to address (S. Hart, 2009). The way people participate as citizens is shaped by emotions and sense of belonging to communities (B. E. Wood, 2013). In terms of the global (and geographically boundless) ‘online’ community, the question arises as to whether digitally-mediated spaces provide young people with the same sense of belonging as material local communities, and how this may affect online participation.

### **1.3 The Research Problem and Core Research Questions**

Weaving citizenship education into curricula policies ‘normalises’ expectations of participatory citizenship (B. E. Wood, 2013). Defining digital citizenship and promoting the concept through the Ministry of Education and pedagogical resources serves to discursively normalise particular ways of being and doing citizen using digital technologies. Yet how does this translate to reality for young New Zealanders who may face accessibility issues

and other constraints? There is a need therefore, to consider what is expected from digital citizens in contemporary society, and conversely to consider what young people feel is expected of them as digital citizens.

Bennett, Wells, and Rank (2009) argue there has been a change in the way many young people understand what it means to be citizen. They argue that young people are less inclined to engage in traditional ‘dutiful citizen’ practices such as conventional political engagement. Instead, there has been a shift of younger people towards being ‘self-actualizing citizens’, socially aware and immersed within wider, less traditional information sources via digital technologies. This raises considerations about how young people can be taught about ways of being and doing citizen. Central to these considerations is whether being a digital citizen is constructed as different to, or an extension of, everyday ways of being citizen. For instance, is the aim of digital citizenship education to produce civic-minded citizens who are comfortable utilising digitally-mediated spaces as tools to support their performance of ‘offline’ citizenship? One example of this outcome would be Christchurch’s Student Volunteer Army, who utilised social media to organise their community volunteer actions following the Christchurch earthquakes (Webster, 2011, April 8). Or is educating for digital citizenship about encouraging a new way of being and doing citizen in digitally-mediated spaces? If so, how relevant are these constructions of digital citizen habitus to young people and their lived experiences? If education is to address digitally-mediated citizenship, there is a need to understand how young people construct citizenship and digital citizenship, and how they perceive technology shaping ways of being and doing citizen.

To explore these issues, I devised research questions (see Table 1-1) that I then utilised to inform my theoretical and methodological approach to the overall research project.



**Table 1-1** *Research Questions*

<b>Core Research Question:</b>	
How meaningful is the concept of ‘digital citizenship’ to young people?	
<b>Sub-Questions:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How do young people understand ‘digital citizenship’?</li> <li>2. How do young people understand ‘citizenship’?</li> <li>3. How meaningful is the definition of the New Zealand ‘digital citizen’ to young people?</li> <li>4. Where do young people feel belonging and/or engaged with communities?</li> <li>5. How do young people feel their digital practices reflect the concept of digital citizenship?</li> </ol>

I undertook my research in the months after the September, 2014 general election campaign in New Zealand, collecting data between October, 2014 and June, 2015. Doing so provided me with an unique opportunity to capture young people’s thoughts at a time when the focus had recently been upon political citizenship practices. The 2014 campaign was touted as one of the ‘dirtiest’ in New Zealand political history (Vowles et al., 2017) and interestingly, issues of digital security and privacy were raised repeatedly. A new political party, Internet-MANA, was formed to “campaign against breaches of privacy and civil liberties and against mass surveillance” (Vowles et al., 2017, p. 5) as well as upon issues of social inequality. The publication of the book *Dirty Politics* (Hager, 2014) highlighted cybersecurity issues and the manipulation of digitally-mediated political spaces by drawing upon hacked emails from a right-wing blogger that indicated collusion between National Party members to manipulate political conversations online. The New Zealand government was accused of mass surveillance of its own citizens by Edward Snowden, a former United States National Security Agency whistle-blower (Biography.com Editors, 2019, January 16; Fisher, 2017, November 28). International issues, such as the United States Net Neutrality law which aimed to ensure internet data delivery was treated neutrally, dominated the internet, even in New Zealand. At the same time, issues surrounding what it meant to be a citizen in New Zealand were prevalent, with discussions of income inequality and citizens living in poverty prior to the election (Vowles et al., 2017). As I found during the interviews,

young New Zealanders were aware of these topics, and it is likely to have shaped the way these young people (and I) were thinking about their (digital) citizenship.

#### **1.4 Acknowledging My Positioning as Researcher**

As researchers, we cannot avoid inserting ourselves into the research (B. Davies et al., 2004; Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Finlay, 2002; Miller, Birch, Mauthner, & Jessop, 2012). Our various positionings will inform and shape our research aims, design, and implementation (B. Davies et al., 2004; Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). During the research process, our backgrounds, our current contexts and lived experiences, and our reflections, shape the way we approach the research (Finlay, 2002). Our understandings of the research process as an ethical endeavour shape the way we react to ethical moments (Miller et al., 2012). It is relevant, therefore, that my reflexivity begins from the outset with an acknowledgment of the way I approached this research project.

My interest in young people and their use of digital media evolved from the research conducted for my Master of Arts (MA) thesis (Blanch, 2013). In my MA, I looked at the use of Facebook for educational purposes by a teacher and her students, and the impact this had upon students' identity negotiations. My initial thought, for this doctoral project, was to continue the focus on social media and look more specifically at the way young New Zealanders used social media in their everyday lives. However, whilst developing the doctoral research proposal, I came across the term 'digital citizenship' in the New Zealand curriculum. Yet, when I informally asked people about 'digital citizenship', students seemed unaware of this concept, and many teachers were either unaware or seemed to focus on cybersafety concerns, rather than the definition contained within the Ministry of Education E-learning framework (Te Kete Ipurangi, n.d.-b).

Upon looking at the detailed definitions of digital citizenship offered by Netsafe (Netsafe, 2015, September 16), I was dubious whether any one person could fulfil the idealised criteria provided. As an avid and, I believed, relatively competent user of technology, I was even unsure about whether I could meet the criteria of 'digital citizen'. Reading the broad and subjective criteria, I found myself confused - How competent do I need to be in managing ICT challenges? Does the need to understand the languages of digital technologies mean I need to be able to write/code software programs? If I stopped shopping online, was I failing to participate economically? If I disagree with the idea that 'purchased'

e-books and other e-media are only rented, not owned by the purchaser, does that mean I could not be a digital citizen? If, as a relatively confident technology user, I was struggling with these definitions, I wondered how those who perhaps felt less confident would fare.

I considered that perhaps it was ‘just me’. Perhaps, as a middle-aged, Pākehā-European mother of three teenagers, I was ‘out of touch’ – a ‘digital immigrant’ as Prensky (2001, 2010) might call me. I decided to ask my own ‘digital natives’ in the house, who after rolling their eyes at yet another of ‘Mum’s questions’, were also bemused by the outlined definition of a digital citizen. Furthermore, they were unaware of any overt teaching of digital citizenship at school beyond lectures on appropriate use of the school Wi-Fi network and the dangers of social media. As this was an anecdotal and limited indication of the role of ‘digital citizenship’ within the curriculum, I was interested as to what might be happening on a broader scale.

Like citizenship education, digital citizenship is woven through the curriculum and may not be overtly addressed. More subtly, digital citizenship concepts may be reinforced every time students are reminded about appropriate research sites and to cite digital material appropriately when referencing their work. How schools were delivering, or perhaps not delivering, digital citizenship education was interesting, but I kept returning to my struggle to develop my own understanding of digital citizenship. Furthermore, I wondered, if the topic is not addressed openly, could the concept of digital citizenship be meaningful for young people? My interest piqued, I decided to explore the concept of digital citizenship further, and specifically how young people understood digital citizenship.

Citizenship and belonging are issues that I have been grappling with on a personal level in recent years. I was born overseas to an English citizen parent, and a New Zealand citizen parent, both of whom grew up in New Zealand. As a family, we returned to New Zealand when I was very young. I grew up in New Zealand and considered myself a New Zealand citizen. Yet, after living and working in New Zealand for many years, I was surprised to be told, in my late twenties, that I was not ‘officially’ a New Zealander as I had been born overseas. I began to feel a sense of disconnect from my childhood memories of place. It seemed that the communities I felt I belonged to, and the connections I had made through my life, had been judged invalid. If I was not a New Zealander, where did I belong? I had only vague memories of my life before New Zealand. Yet I was apparently supposed to identify with my birthplace, rather than with the country I lived in and where I had grown

up. I felt both relieved and aggrieved when at a later date I was informed that, whilst ‘technically’ a citizen of New Zealand based on parental citizenship, I would have to follow an application process and purchase confirmation of this status. Whilst on paper the issue of my legal citizenship was addressed, the sense of disconnect and limbo I felt during the process lingered for some time. It was this experience I believe, that led me to feel a sense of recognition when I read of citizenship as belonging, and that has informed my readings of citizenship with regard to participation, membership, and community.

Similarly, my experiences during my studies have shaped this thesis. My MA studies had led me to exploring young people’s use and performance of identity on social media, specifically Facebook. From these studies, evolved my theoretically-based Springer Reference book chapter on place and space that has informed my understandings of young people’s participation in digitally-mediated spaces (Blanch, 2015). I have drawn upon the concepts of blurred boundaries and interrelational spaces that I explored in the book chapter as a theoretical basis for this thesis (see Chapter 2).

Thus, I acknowledge that my life experiences have shaped my theoretical approach and informed my research design. In maintaining a reflexive approach throughout the research project, I seek to acknowledge these influences upon my research practice and recognise the role these play as I, and my participants, co-construct the resulting knowledge.

## **1.5 Significance of the Research**

Many writers note the complexity of citizenship (see for example, Bellamy, 2008; Clarke et al., 2014; Faulks, 2000; Heater, 2004). Digital citizenship is equally messy. Nevertheless, while young people’s understandings of their lived citizenship have been explored (see for example, B. E. Wood, 2010, 2012, 2013; P. Wood, 2013), there is little, if any, academic research conducted that explores how young people understand their lived experiences of digital citizenship in New Zealand. In this thesis, I aim to address the gap between the theoretical concepts and the prescription of appropriate digital practices, by exploring young people’s understandings of digital citizenship. As Vivienne et al. (2016) note, “digital citizenship is a highly contested notion . . . [which] needs reframing through empirical research and critical scholarship so it can better reflect the diverse experiences that constitute a life integrated with digital and networked technologies” (p. 1). They are among a growing number of writers (for example, Atif & Chou, 2018; BurrIDGE, 2010; Couldry et al., 2014;

de Moraes & de Andrade, 2015; Gibbs, 2010; Goggin, 2016; Isin & Ruppert, 2015; Isman & Gungoren, 2013; McCosker, 2015; Mossberger, Tolbert, & McNeal, 2008b) exploring the theoretical conceptualisation of digital citizenship, how digital citizenship may be understood, and how this may shape the practices of doing digital citizenship.

In this thesis, I privilege the views of young New Zealanders as they discuss their digital practices and co-construct meaning of what it means to be and do digital citizen. Much of what is written about digital citizenship and digital citizenship education focusses upon shaping digital practices as a way of encouraging ‘ideal’ digital citizenship traits among students. Yet, the voices of young people as users of digital technologies appear to be absent. I explore the way young people in New Zealand construct and claim their identities as digital citizens through discussing their digital citizenship practices. As our understanding of citizenship continues to be shaped by global, political, and social changes, how young people understand their roles as citizens, both online and offline is important. This thesis therefore seeks to go to the core of what it means for young people to be citizens in a digital age.

It is important to acknowledge the temporal nature of research. I completed this research as the new Digital Technologies curriculum was being implemented in New Zealand schools (fully implemented from 2020). Whilst the focus of the Digital Technologies curriculum is overtly skills-based, topics exploring what it means to be a digital citizen are also suggested and the Netsafe definition I utilised in this research continues to be promoted to schools (Ministry of Education, n.d.-a). Given that the digital practices my participants engaged in reflect the ways young people have been reported to use digital spaces in a range of literature since at least 2006 (see Chapter 3), and that the discursive context of risk and opportunity is equally resilient (see Chapter 2), it is likely that the ways the young people in this study understood digital citizenship are not unique and similar understandings may be held by others. Nonetheless, the digital environment continues to shift and will continue to shape ways of being and doing citizenship in digital spaces, which only reinforces the need for educators to take into account young people’s lived experiences in discussions around digital citizenship.

## 1.6 Mapping the Thesis

This thesis comprises nine chapters exploring how meaningful the concept of digital citizenship is to young people. I argue that definitions of ‘digital citizenship’ that attempt to define the ‘ideal’ digital citizen habitus are not meaningful to young people. Instead, I argue, young people make sense of their lived experiences as digital citizens by drawing upon discourses of digital participation, locating themselves as belonging to digitally-mediated spaces and places, and making explicit their meaning-making through practices that open opportunities for new interpretations of ways of doing digital citizenship.

In Chapter 2, I outline the theoretical frameworks that underpin this thesis and shape the lens used to explore young people’s understandings of digital citizenship. For the purposes of this study, I operated at a theoretical junction, informed by understandings of discourses (Foucault, 1972, 2002), notions of space and place (Massey, 2005), Bourdieusian notions of field, capital, and habitus (Bourdieu, 1977; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), and understandings of citizenship (see for example, Dwyer, 2010; Faulks, 2000; D. K. Hart & Wright, 1998; Heater, 1999, 2004; Isin & Wood, 1999; T. H. Marshall, 1950; Mutch, 2005; Pocock, 1981). Drawing upon multiple theories underscores the nuanced complexity of citizenship and the myriad ways of conceptualising what it is to be and do citizen in an increasingly digitally-mediated society. I therefore seek to position these multiple theoretical approaches as the theoretical framework that shaped the development, enactment, and analysis of this research and I introduce relevant conceptual terms, such as discourse, habitus, and capital that I use throughout this thesis, in order to give insight into the analytical tools utilised. This chapter also provides an explanation for my use of ‘(digital) citizenship’ to indicate an understanding of digital citizenship as digitally-mediated citizenship.

In Chapter 3, I introduce research pertinent to this thesis with a focus on the key themes in the literature around young people’s ways of being and doing citizenship and digital citizenship. This chapter delves into the way digital citizenship has been variously constructed in the literature, before moving to outline the New Zealand context within which young New Zealanders are learning ways of be(com)ing citizens and doing citizenship and digital citizenship.

In Chapter 4, I discuss my methodological approach to the research, the contexts in which I undertook the project and the resulting methods of data collection and analytical approach. I highlight my approach to ensure ethical research practice, the ethical considerations inherent in researching with young people, and the ethical moments that gave me pause, and where a reflexive approach ensures a respectful and ethical process.

In Chapters Five to Eight, I present the substantive findings based upon my research data. Chapter 5 begins by analysing the discursive cues embedded in the websites, resources, and definitions that shape the way the use of digitally-mediated spaces is constructed. The chapter then explores the ways young people reacted to the ‘ideal’ definition, pushing back and challenging the subjective assumptions they perceived as underpinning expectations of attitudes, behaviours, and skills. Chapter 5 concludes with the ‘alternate’ ways young people defined digital citizenship, yet in doing so they drew upon similar constructions of citizenship as formal definitions. Chapter 6 explores the discourses that shape young people’s meaning-making and ways of being and doing (digital) citizen. In Chapter 7, I move to focus on how young people locate their (digital) citizenship in places and spaces through notions of belonging and connectedness. In Chapter 8, the final findings chapter, I focus on the ways young people are doing digital citizenship by making their habitus explicit through enacting digital practices. In this chapter I also explore the alternative digital practices through which young people offer new conceptualisations of digital citizenship.

Finally, in Chapter 9, I draw together the findings of this study that have looked at the ways young people are making-meaning of their lived experiences to (re)frame what it means to be a digital citizen. I outline my conceptualisation of digital citizenship, not as an ideal set of subjective criteria, but as a process of constant re-imagining and reinvention. I discuss the implications of working with young people to co-construct the concept of digital citizenship and make recommendations for what this may mean for digital citizenship education through the curriculum. Finally, I acknowledge the contributions and limitations of this study, and propose further research that may build upon my findings, before offering a reimagining of citizenship models as a model of digital citizenship and some concluding thoughts.

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## **Chapter 2: Being and Doing (Digital) Citizen: Focussing the Lens**

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In the preceding chapter, I provided an outline of the way Western conceptualisations of citizenship have evolved. Historically, ways of being and doing citizen have evolved from considering citizenship as a set of legal privileges and rights associated with membership of a nation-state, to include layers of participatory practice, belonging, and more personalised ways of being. The way we think of citizenship shapes the way we think of digital citizenship. A core argument of this thesis, therefore, is that digital citizenship is discursively constructed and reflects the being and doing of citizen(ship) in digital spaces, via digital technologies.

The purpose of this chapter is to make explicit the theoretical perspectives that underpinned my exploration of ways of being and doing digital citizenship and informed my approach and analysis throughout this study. In this thesis, I adopted a multiple focus theoretical lens and drew upon multiple theoretical strands: understandings of poststructuralist discourses (Section 2.1); Bourdieusian concepts of field, habitus, and capital (Section 2.2); concepts of online and offline as mediated spaces (Section 2.3); and theoretical understandings of (digital) citizenship (Section 2.4). These theoretical concepts do not necessarily fit together smoothly, although the multiple approaches also do not conflict. Rather, these multiple theories underscore the complexity of thinking about digital citizenship and the myriad ways of conceptualising what it is to be and do citizen in an increasingly digitally-mediated society.

### **2.1 Discursive Constructions**

At the core of this thesis is the way citizenship and digital citizenship are understood within a social context. To understand that citizenship, and by inference, digital citizenship, is socially constructed, we need look no further than the fact that citizenship has evolved, at least in Western societies, socially, culturally, and historically. Citizenship is contextualised, taking on different values and meanings according to social and political contexts (Andersen & Siim, 2004; Lister, 2007b; Siim, 2000). Within social contexts, individuals make meaning of their practices, shared understandings develop, and social norms around what it means to 'be and do citizen' are reinforced through the language used to describe practices.

An example of the way language gives meaning is in the terminology I draw upon to describe citizens and citizenship. Throughout this thesis, I refer to young people's 'ways' of being and doing, terms which imply multiple ways of being and multiple ways of doing. Indeed, the term 'doing citizen' incorporates the ways that citizenship is performed through practices. It is in doing practices that are recognised (or misrecognised) as practices of citizenship, that individuals become citizen. Citizens therefore are the site of (re)production of discourses and knowledge of what it means to be citizen.

Social constructionism holds that our understanding of reality, and the way we make meaning of our lived experiences, is shaped by our social context and the interactions we have with others (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Crotty, 1998; Gergen & Gergen, 2008; Gergen, 2012). In other words, citizenship is not an immutable 'fact'; it only takes on meaning as individuals make meaning and interpret particular ways of being as representing citizenship within their social context. Furthermore, language serves as a medium to share meaning-making and construct understanding. For instance, the language used to describe various concepts of citizenship, such as 'digital citizenship' or 'participatory citizenship', shapes understandings of particular ways of being and doing citizen. Language gives the world meaning, acting as symbolic representations that shape social realities (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Crotty, 1998; Edley, 2001; Gergen & Gergen, 2008; S. Hall, 1997) and serves to reflect and construct how citizenship is understood.

Understanding that language shapes reality moves social constructionism towards a poststructuralist understanding of language as discourse, or practices that constitute knowledge (Foucault, 1972). A poststructuralist approach acknowledges the power of discourses to make possible multiple meanings and interpretations through associated "language-like systems" (B. Davies, 2000, p. 88), such as embodied cues that convey meaning. In other words, meaning is produced not just through the language or words used, but through the discursive cues associated with, and conveyed through, language (S. Hall, 1997). Discursive cues are the contextual markers that guide meaning-making in ways that invite recognition of particular discourses and particular ways of seeing the world (Buskell, 2015; Metzger, 2019). For instance, the term 'digital citizenship' implies technology-based citizenship practices and opens the possibility of understanding those who use technology to be doing digital citizenship, when 'citizenship' is already a discursively laden term. Similarly, language used in digital citizenship education, such as 'cyberbullying' and

‘cybersafety’, acts as discursive cues to invite an understanding of digital spaces as risky, and of digital citizenship as involving particular digitally-mediated practices. In terms of digital citizenship, language and discourses shape how citizenship is understood, and how practices are understood to constitute citizenship.

### 2.1.1 Discourses

Discourses offer a way to explore how beliefs and meaning-making shape reality through language. Foucault (1972) defined discourses as “practices which systematically form the objects of which they speak” (p. 49). Discourse is about “language *and* practice” (S. Hall, 1997, p. 44) together constructing meaning and ways of knowing (Foucault, 1972). Moreover, discourses are often unquestioned and become embedded and normalised in society, coming to appear as common sense and making it difficult to conceive of alternative ways of thinking (Somers & Gibson, 1993; St. Pierre, 2000). In other words, discourses are the tools of social construction, making possible certain ways of knowing and doing, but at the same time, restricting other ways of knowing and doing (Foucault, 1972; S. Hall, 1997). For example, discourses around formal citizenship illustrate the taken-for-granted need for a relationship between nation-state and the ‘legal citizen’ and the right of the nation-state to monitor and control some citizen practices, such as international travel. However, bringing into being the concept of the ‘legal citizen’ also brings forth the concept of the ‘illegal non-citizen’. Discourses, therefore, are never a singular set of practices, but are multiple and contradictory sets of practices that operate to construct, and yet constrain, possibilities and ways of thinking.

When multiple discourses converge around one object, they form what Foucault (1972) termed a discursive formation. Discursive formations are organising principles that connect recurring ways of thinking and knowing about an object (Danaher, Schirato, & Webb, 2000; Foucault, 1972). For instance, evolving concepts of citizenship have led to multiple discourses of citizenship, where to be a citizen is constructed through discourses such as status, political engagement, belonging, and participation. In any particular socio-historical context, different discourses may be dominant, and allow us to discuss citizenship in different ways, yet all are connected in a discursive formation that discursively constructs how we perceive citizenship.

Discourses are not neutral. Indeed, Foucault argued that discourses, and discursive formations, must be troubled and recognised as socially and historically produced; “as a multiplicity of discursive elements that can come into play in various strategies” (Foucault, 1978, p. 100). For instance, discourses around digital citizenship were not possible until the social context included the digital aspects. Equally, discourses of digital citizenship are historically contextualised through discourses of citizenship. To think about citizenship is to draw upon centuries of western discursive conceptualisations of citizenship and what it means to be and do citizenship. To think about digital citizenship is to impose these discursive constructs of citizenship within a digital context. Further complicating understandings of digital citizenship are discourses that construct young people as ‘becoming’ citizens, as well as discourses that construct technology use, especially by young people, as risky, yet also offering opportunity. Thus, the discursive formation of digital citizenship has woven in multiple, at times contradictory, discourses that operate to construct and constrain ways of being and doing in digitally-mediated spaces. Acknowledging the role of discourses in shaping ways of being and doing allows me to explore the ways that discourses operate to shape young people’s understanding of digital citizenship.

### **2.1.2 Discourses, power, resistance, and agency**

Discourses often reflect social hierarchical structures. Dominant discourses reflect the hegemonic sociocultural beliefs reproduced through practices (Foucault, 2002). Discourses therefore reflect social power relations but depend upon the actions of social institutions and social actors to reproduce power relations (Foucault, 2002; Weedon, 1987). Social actors (and institutions) take up discourses and reproduce discourses through their practices in ways that serve to reproduce the hierarchies within social structures such as class, race, gender, (dis)ability, and age (B. Davies, 2000). For instance, the construction of a definition of digital citizenship privileges particular discourses of citizenship over others. When a definition of digital citizenship is promoted by the government’s Ministry of Education to schools, it reinforces the discursively constructed definition and further reinforces discourses around citizenship as subject to the nation-state’s ability to define citizens’ ways of being and doing.

For Foucault (1972, 2002), knowledge and power are linked. The ability to exercise power is the ability to produce what is known. To be able to construct what it means to be and do (digital) citizen, nation-states must be supported by power relations and discourses

that position citizens as subjects of the state. The nation-state must then be able to exercise that power in ways that allow the nation-state, through its actors, to name and elicit particular citizen practices. In other words, discourses make possible ways of being citizen and enable the nation-state to strategically promote and elicit particular discursive practices to shape what it means to be and do citizen (Foucault, 2002).

Discourses are the tools through which power, and agency, are exercised. As Cameron (2001) points out, Foucault noted that “a great deal of power and social control is exercised not by brute physical force or even by economic coercion, but by the activities of ‘experts’ who are licensed to define, describe and classify things and people” (p. 16). In part, this is because dominant discourses make the social hierarchy seem common sense and reinforce the social structure by positioning individuals and institutions in networks of power relations. Yet, “where there is power, there is resistance” (Foucault, 1978, p. 95), and individuals can exercise agency by enacting practices that challenge and resist dominant constructions. For instance, young people are increasingly resisting dominant discourses that position youth as ‘becoming’ citizens disengaged from political participation. Instead, they are choosing to engage in political activism in alternate ways, such as through protests and informal participation, a recent example being the youth-led ‘Strike 4 Climate Change’ protests taking place globally (Munro, 2019; Watts, 2019). In doing so, young people are exercising agency in taking up particular discourses of political participation and active citizenship, whilst resisting discourses of youth as disengaged.

Having multiple discourses of citizenship available to draw upon makes possible agency in ways of being and doing citizen. For instance, a poststructuralist stance positions the citizen as product of discourses as ‘subject’. As individuals internalise the discourses surrounding them from birth, they become subjects, positioned as subject to, and subject of, discourses (Belsey, 2002, p. 57). Yet agency means the subject may resist that positioning and perform discursive practices in a way that forms a new subjectivity (St Pierre, 2000). In other words, subjectivity is the way individuals make meaning of the discursive positionings available to them (B. Davies, 2000; St Pierre, 2000; Weedon, 1987). Subjectivity therefore represents the socially constructed ‘private self’ (Wetherell, 2008), a concept similar to Bourdieu’s concept of *habitus*, the internalised, durable ways of being shaped by experiences and that shape ways of doing (Wacquant, 1992; Wacquant & Akçaoğlu, 2017; White, Wyn, & Robards, 2017). How young people understand what it means to be and do

digital citizen will be shaped by their awareness of the multiple discourses in their sociocultural and historical context.

It is at this point that I step away from a poststructuralist discourse analysis approach to introduce Bourdieu's tripartite theory of practice to explore ways of being and doing (digital) citizen. Including a Bourdieusian understanding of *field*, *habitus*, and *capitals* allows me to consider the social position of the individual and consider relational aspects of belonging, a central notion underpinning citizenship. Thomas argues that Bourdieu's analysis of field emphasises the relational and allows us to "theorise belonging as a practice and product of the relations of power" (K. Thomas, 2015, p. 41). By incorporating Bourdieu's concepts, I take into account the interactions with social structures that shape individual and shared understandings of digital citizenship and what it means to be and do digital citizen.

Discourse analysis is not incompatible with Bourdieu's theory of practice, although Bourdieu critiqued aspects of discourse analysis (Bourdieu, 1991; Sayer, 2018). Bourdieu, like Foucault, was interested in the way language operated as a tool for power and domination (Bourdieu, 1991; Kłos-Czerwińska, 2015; Sayer, 2018). Indeed, Bourdieu (1991) viewed language as a site of struggle for domination, where language is an expression of habitus. Part of the problem is that Bourdieu never clearly defined what he meant by 'discourse' even though he frequently used the term, and much of his critique of discourse analysis appears to centre around detailed linguistic analysis techniques (Kłos-Czerwińska, 2015). However, Bourdieu acknowledged that discourses operate in relation to habitus, providing possibilities and meanings that might be taken-up and reproduced by social agents whose position in the field's power hierarchy determines the way discourses are taken up by others (Kłos-Czerwińska, 2015). In other words, the discourses taken up by dominant power groups in the field are more likely to become the dominant discourses of that field, and perhaps of society. A focus on discourses and the way they contribute to norms allows us to consider the discursive influences upon habitus and the way discursive constructions of capital contribute to reproducing power. In the following section, I outline Bourdieu's theoretical tools in more detail.

## 2.2 Ways of Being and Doing Citizen

Throughout his work, Bourdieu “tried to understand and explain the relationship between people’s practices and the contexts within which those practices occur” (Webb, Schirato, & Danaher, 2002, p. 21). To do so, Bourdieu posited key theoretical ideas, or “thinking tools” (Grenfell, 2012, p. 2) such as *fields*, *habitus*, and *capital*. Whilst *habitus* can be used to explain aspects of the way individuals practice citizenship, those practices emerge within social contexts or fields. At the same time, the possession of capital explains the constraints on the forms of citizenship available to the individual. For Bourdieu, the concepts of field, *habitus*, and capital are interdependent, forming a relational theory of practice that can be used to explain the practical world.

### 2.2.1 Social space and field

Bourdieu envisaged the social world as comprised of relational spaces (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Hilgers & Mangez, 2015). He called these relational spaces fields, where a field is defined as “a network, or configuration, of objective relations between positions” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 97). Each field, or distinct social sphere, has its own “discourses, institutions, values, rules and regulations – which produce and transform attitudes and practices” (Webb et al., 2002, p. 21). Bourdieu offers the metaphor of field as an arena or force field of sorts, within which individuals are involved in a struggle to determine and gain the valued form of capital (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Thomson, 2012; Webb et al., 2002). Although the logics of the field constrain actions, individuals become socialised into a field and develop a feel for the game, learning to negotiate the rules and regulations as they seek to shape the field to their advantage (Albright & Hartman, 2018; Hilgers & Mangez, 2015; Webb et al., 2002). Fields are therefore fluid and dynamic, subject to challenge and transformation by the individual actors within the field. Those individuals or groups who possess most of the valued capital and occupy high positions within the field can exercise the most power and will seek to maintain the value of what they hold. The added advantage of wielding this positional power is that it enables those “groups or agents to designate what is ‘authentic’ capital”, or the valued capital for that field (Webb et al., 2002, p. 23).

Bourdieu’s field theory is not without critique. Recently, Wacquant (Wacquant & Akçaoğlu, 2017), a student and collaborator of Bourdieu, has argued for a

reconceptualisation of fields as a way of clarifying Bourdieu's logic. Bourdieu's notion of fields has been criticised for being unclear about "*how many fields there are and where exactly the boundaries between the fields lie*" [original emphasis] (Joas, Knöbl, & Skinner, 2011, p. 22; see also Hilgers & Mangez, 2015; Thomson, 2012). Indeed, his explanations of 'field' have been described as 'sloppy', with Bourdieu interchanging this terminology with social space and social fields (Wacquant & Akçaoğlu, 2017). However, Wacquant argues that if we consider social space as the 'mother-category' and field as the "specialized social space arising when a domain of action and authority becomes sufficiently demarcated, autonomized, and monopolized" then it can clear misconceptions of boundaries and frequency (Wacquant & Akçaoğlu, 2017, p. 62). Social space is best thought of as the "anchor category" (Wacquant & Akçaoğlu, 2017, p. 63), which contains multiple overlapping fields where capital is concentrated and distributed within an institutionalised and bounded space.

As well as multiple fields within social space, Bourdieu further envisioned each field as divided into sub-fields, shaped by the logics of the larger field, but each with "its own internal logics, rules and regularities" (Thomson, 2012, p. 70). For instance, education is a field, containing multiple sub-fields, such as early childhood, primary, secondary, and tertiary sub-fields. While education as a field holds its own principles, rules, and values, each sub-field will also have its own principles, rules, values, and beliefs (Grenfell & James, 1998). Similarly, it is possible to consider digital platforms, such as social media sites, as fields that require individuals to acquire certain capital in order to negotiate the distinct cultures, rules, values, and ways of being. Within each social media site may be sub-fields, focussed around common interests, values, and ways of being. For example, Instagram may be considered a field, but contains sub-fields focussed around interests such as make-up and beauty, photography, celebrity culture, and so on. Each field interconnects with other fields, and boundaries are fluid. Individuals inhabit these multiple sites of practice and can move and swap capital between fields. Furthermore, valued capital and power in one field may be utilised by individuals to gain valued capital and power in another field (Albright & Hartman, 2018; Thomson, 2012). Valued capital of literacy within the education field, is also valuable in digital fields, allowing individuals to access and understand information more easily, and use those skills to gain capital in other forms, such as economic or social capital (Ignatow & Robinson, 2017; Witte & Mannon, 2009).



The links between fields can influence changes in the values and rules within these fields. As the need for certain capitals in digital fields has been recognised, values and discourses around young people's use of digital technologies have shifted and there has been recognition of the role of education as a system for developing valued digital capital in terms of the skills and competencies needed to use digital technologies. Knowing how to 'play the game' in education can therefore help individuals 'play the game' in digital fields. Following this metaphor, if the field is the game, then habitus is the disposition that lets us instinctively know how to play the game.

### **2.2.2 Habitus**

One way to think of citizenship is as practice, or enactment of habitus. Habitus is an individual's way of being (Costa, Burke, & Murphy, 2018). It is "the strategy-generating principle enabling agents to cope with unforeseen and ever-changing situations . . . a system of lasting and transposable dispositions which, integrating past experiences", shapes thoughts and actions (Bourdieu, 1977, as cited in Wacquant, 1992, p. 18). Habitus is the unconscious way of knowing how to act, the habitual practices which stay with individuals across contexts and time. As individuals inhabit a field, they internalise the values, rules, and constraints of that field; they develop a feel for the game. They then carry, or transpose, these internalised dispositions through to other fields, and these durable dispositions influence their thoughts and actions within those fields. In other words, habitus is a learned process, shaped by interactions within fields, and that shapes interactions within fields. In terms of digital citizenship, habitus is the learned ways of being and doing citizen that are enacted in online, or digital spaces. Furthermore, habitus is written upon the body. It is embodied and shown in the way individuals act and portray their bodies (*'hexis'*), such as through deportment or facial expressions (Webb et al., 2002). When digitally-mediated, habitus is reflected in the ways individuals choose to embody themselves as avatars, and even through which sites they choose to interact with. Individuals enact habitus to 'write themselves into being' online (boyd, 2006, 2008). In other words, habitus is made visible in online spaces through digital practices.

Habitus is initially learnt through socialisation within the family, through interactions with the familial habitus and cultural capital. However, the interaction of individual habitus with (and within) the cultural field also gives rise to a form of shared habitus. In other words, individuals who share common social conditions will internalise

similar dispositions (Burke, 2016; Maton, 2012). For Bourdieu, the shared habitus was classed, based around access to classed cultural capital and economic capital. However, habitus can also be understood as a collective concept beyond class. Thinking of habitus as a shared, collective concept allows us to consider the relationship between field, individual, and the “collective and interrelated practices of *multiple individuals* within a particular field” [original emphasis] (Burke, Emmerich, & Ingram, 2013, p. 166). The notion of a shared or collective habitus opens possibilities for the shaping of individual habitus not just through the field, but through interactions with others and collective practices within fields (Burke et al., 2013).

The notion of habitus as modifiable through experiences addresses concerns that habitus may seem essentialist. Indeed, Bourdieu claimed that, as habitus is “the product of history, it is an open system of dispositions that is constantly subjected to experiences, and therefore constantly affected by them in a way that either reinforces or modifies its structures” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 133). Habitus is shaped, both individually and collectively, by the experiences of the individual and the shared collective experiences of the group, providing boundaries for action, but not determining action (Webb et al., 2002).

In order to understand practices as a result of habitus, we must understand the field within which the individual is active (Maton, 2012). For example, a young person’s digital citizen habitus, or way of being digital citizen, will be developed within multiple fields. Familial habitus and access to technological or digital capitals (Carlson & Isaacs, 2018; Park, 2017) will shape the young person’s initial access and practices, as well as attitudes towards technology and understanding of what it means to be a citizen. The education field will further shape, through schooling practices and the curriculum, young people’s learning around ways of being and doing citizen. With digital technologies becoming more prevalent within schools, the ways that teachers and peers construct the use of technology will influence individuals’ developing habitus. The learned habitus will shape the young person’s interactions on the internet (or within the field of the internet), the sites where they feel comfortable, and the way they engage in digital practices. However, through engaging online, the young person may learn new ways of being and their digital citizen habitus may evolve as, for example, new sub-fields of sites are created, and peers collectively engage with new sites in different ways. Habitus is shaped through socialised experiences but may also be learned through training and education (Fowler, 1996). Thus, habitus is structured

by both the field and experiences within that field, and in turn, structures the field through the modification of practices.

Bourdieu emphasised the relationship between field and habitus. He noted that for those who have internalised the habitus of the field, the normed way of being, the individual finds themselves “‘as a fish in water’, it does not feel the weight of the water and takes the world about itself for granted” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 127). In other words, for those who have internalised the norms of the field, there is a fit between individual and collective habitus (Maton, 2012). For example, those who inhabit digitally-mediated spaces learn skills and ways of being that help them feel comfortable interacting online. They may take for granted what is required to comfortably inhabit that field and feel like ‘a fish in water’ inhabiting digitally-mediated spaces.

As individuals internalise their habitus, they begin to perceive the fields where they will not be ‘a fish in water’. They will begin to construct the options in life available for themselves and those with a similar habitus and may automatically deem other options as unthinkable (Webb et al., 2002). Furthermore, it may seem natural that some options are limited. Bourdieu terms this unconscious submission to the natural order, or the ‘way things are’, *doxa* (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Maton, 2012; Webb et al., 2002). *Doxa* occurs, not because the individual agrees with the situation, but because the individual takes the situation for granted and assumes there are no alternatives. Because their habitus is structured by the field and in doing so structures the field, the individual is caught up in the way the world is. They accept the social order as ‘natural’ and become complicit in reinforcing social power relations. Bourdieu terms this misrecognition as *symbolic violence* (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), where the violence is not physical, but instead reproduces the social hierarchy and “enables certain groups occupying privileged positions to maintain dominance over others” (Webb et al., 2002, p. 118). For example, through symbolic violence, the different power positions occupied by young people, adults, and agents of the nation-state seem natural. Teachers and students are complicit in reinforcing the nation-state’s exercising of power over citizens by accepting particular understandings of citizenship and reproducing these through education. Symbolic violence therefore works to reinforce dominance by some groups in a field through the doxic acceptance by less dominant groups of the ‘natural order’ of the world.

Ultimately, habitus is capital embodied through interactions with the field (Maton, 2012). Habitus can be used to explain “how social and cultural messages (both actual and symbolic) shape individuals’ thoughts and actions” (O'Brien & Ó Fathaigh, 2005, p. 68). In other words, habitus (both collective and individual) can be used to explain the way discourses shape social spaces and fields, and thus shape collective and individual ways of being and doing. In terms of substantive citizenship, habitus explains how discourses shape ways of being and doing citizen. However, Bourdieu’s third component, capital, is also important. The types of capital available shape the way habitus is ultimately expressed through practices. Just as the value of a particular habitus may vary between fields, so too does capital.

### 2.2.3 Capitals

For Bourdieu, capital is “a resource (that is, a form of wealth) which yields power” (Calhoun, 1993, p. 69). As noted earlier (Section 2.2.1), within fields, individuals strive to maximise their capital as the possession of valued capital is associated with the ability to exercise power within that field. However, Bourdieu expands the notion of capital beyond that of the objective material form or economic capital, to include the immaterial forms of symbolic and social capital, and the multiple forms of cultural capital (Calhoun, 1993). For Bourdieu, having one form of capital makes it easier to gain other capitals, and all forms can be traded for rewards (Bourdieu, 1986). However, the value of capital is subjective, contextual, and can vary between fields. Thus, capital will only have worth if it is recognised as valued in that field. For example, the symbolic capital or status of formal New Zealand citizenship may not be recognised as valued in another country but serves to act as an inclusionary and exclusionary force within New Zealand. On the other hand, while the technological capital of knowing how to build and use computers may have little value in workplaces without a technology component, individuals can exchange technological capital for economic capital in workplaces that do require those skills. Those with greater skills will, in certain fields, gain social and symbolic capital, and the ability to exercise power. As technology becomes more prevalent in society, technological capital may be more readily converted to alternative forms of capital. In terms of digital citizenship, capitals provide a way to understand the constraints upon individual practices or enactments of habitus.

Bourdieu outlined several key forms of capital (Bourdieu, 1986): *economic, social, cultural, and symbolic capitals*. Economic capital, or financial wealth, is perhaps the

simplest form of capital. It is simple to measure, easy to trade for rewards, and inheritable. Economic capital can be converted to the other forms of capital more easily than the reverse. It can be traded for cultural capital in the form of training and qualifications, for example to gain technological skills (or capital). These skills and qualifications can then hopefully be converted to further economic capital through well-paid employment (Bourdieu, 1986). For example, possession of adequate economic capital makes it easier to gain technological skills. It allows families and individuals to purchase technology equipment, pay for resources such as adequate internet access, and if necessary, to pay for training in using technology to increase skills, and thus increase cultural capital in that field. Similarly, economic and cultural capitals may be converted to the symbolic capital of formal national citizenship status through payment of fees and meeting eligibility criteria. Economic capital, however, is not easily converted to social capital directly without utilising cultural capital (O'Brien & Ó Fathaigh, 2005). For instance, wealth cannot buy social capital, or status, but it can be used to increase cultural capital, such as skills and qualifications, as well as symbols of prestige, such as ownership of new technologies, and these may then provide access to digital spaces and be used to increase social standing, or social capital.

Social capital is, therefore, the resources accrued through “possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition – or in other words, to membership in a group” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 248). It is the social network of connections that provide access to the collective economic and cultural capitals and provides a multiplier effect. Membership of the group allows an individual to call upon the social, and other, capitals possessed by other members of the group. For instance, in terms of citizenship, social capital gained through marriage may help an individual gain access to formal citizenship. Similarly, knowing a member or citizen of a group may make it easier for an individual to access and join that group. Social capital may allow individuals to access digital spaces and communities, such as gaming communities, or even to access new technologies through friends with more access to economic and cultural capitals. Put simply, it is ‘who you know’ that counts.

The third form of capital Bourdieu refers to is cultural capital, which can take three forms: embodied, objectified, and institutionalised (Bourdieu, 1986). Bourdieu describes embodied cultural capital as “long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 243). Embodied cultural capital is the way capital becomes associated with the

body, for instance as classed linguistic styles. Because it is borne by the body, embodied capital is not ‘inheritable’ per se, but must be ‘earned’ by the individual, is unique to the individual, and dies with the individual. However, embodied capital is ‘inherited’ in terms of unconscious traits learnt from family. It is the mannerisms, pronunciations and bearing, how an individual thinks and moves, that indicate status which is usually classed. While the embodied state is not overtly recognised as a capital in its own right, it can denote symbolic capital through association with status. For instance, as a New Zealand citizen, an individual is a member of a national group. As a member of the national group the individual is likely to have learnt embodied markers of that status, such as mannerisms, language, accents, ways of dressing, and so on, that indicate to others that they are New Zealanders. Within that national group, variations in embodied cultural capital are judged as higher or lower status and contribute to perceptions of symbolic capital and by inference, the individual’s relation to power. Embodied capital, therefore, can be used to identify and include, or exclude, others by making visible differences (Cederberg, 2015).

Institutionalised forms of cultural capital are similarly limited to the individual and their lifetime. Institutionalised forms of cultural capital are essentially academic qualifications gained from the various educational institutes the individual attends. Although confined to the individual, academic qualifications are objectified and given value within particular fields. This allows for comparisons to be made and a hierarchy created of qualifications, which places values upon the qualification and thus the qualified individuals (Bourdieu, 1986). Once a value has been placed, the conversion to economic capital is simplified. However, value is related to the field and the application of the credentials. For instance, while academic credentials may hold little value in some employment situations, they may be of value if applying for formal citizenship to a country where there is a shortage of that qualification. Credentials become a commodity that can be traded for social advantage in some fields.

The objectified state of cultural capital is perhaps the closest to economic capital and therefore seemingly the easiest to grasp. In effect, the objectified state is the possession of ‘things’ or valued cultural goods, such as computers, digital devices, books, artwork, musical instruments, and so on, which can be purchased using economic capital. Indeed, cultural goods become positional goods, a symbolic indicator of the possession of excess economic capital allowing their purchase, and thus associated with social class status

(Bourdieu, 1986). However, cultural capital goes beyond mere possession of physical goods. To gain benefit from cultural goods the ‘holder’ must also possess the ability to appreciate and ‘consume’ the embedded capital within (Bourdieu, 1986). In terms of digital technologies, it is not enough to own the objectified cultural capital of computers and other digital devices. To gain benefit, the individual must possess the attitudes and skills that provide the desire and capability of using the devices.

Throughout this chapter, I have referred to symbolic capital: capital that is recognised as valued and that provides advantage, prestige, honour, and privilege within a field (Bourdieu, 1977; Calhoun, 1993; Moore, 2012). Bourdieu defines symbolic capital as “the form that the various species of capital assume when they are perceived and recognized as legitimate” (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 17). Symbolic capital requires the expenditure of other capitals, particularly economic, yet is perceived as holding a value greater than was expended. Moreover, the conversion of material, economic capital to symbolic capital is concealed within “the action of the social mechanisms” (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 180) meaning that the value of symbolic capital is taken-for-granted. In other words, symbolic capital holds arbitrary symbolic value within a field.

Bourdieu’s concepts were useful for this study because they allowed me to consider the way young people’s habitus is shown through their understandings and practices of digital citizenship when they inhabit multiple overlapping fields, such as education, national and cultural fields, and digital spaces. Although Bourdieu never wrote about digital technologies, his concepts of capital, habitus, and field have proven useful in examining the “interrelations between economic resources, internalized aptitudes, and social positioning” in digital spaces (Ignatow & Robinson, 2017, p. 962). Exploring how young people understand digital citizenship through a Bourdieusian perspective provides some structure to consider young people’s possessions of various capitals, the way they make habitus visible through online practices, their relative positioning in society, and how that positioning shapes their ability to take-up or resist discourses around their use of digital technologies. However, digital spaces are not separate immaterial spaces, as I shall outline further in the next section, and this has implications for the way habitus is enacted.

### 2.3 Spaces of Being and Doing

Having added structure in the form of Bourdieu's theory of practice, I now seek to further enrich the relational aspect through the incorporation of a more abstract notion of space and spaces-between (Massey, 2005). By this, I mean that digital spaces may be structured within fields (Ignatow & Robinson, 2017), but digital spaces also include social spaces of interaction. In part, this view is at odds with Bourdieu who felt that focussing upon the interactional led to overly focussing upon social capital at the expense of examining common structural relations to power (Postill, 2008). However, digital spaces are social, and habitus is created and enacted through interactions in social spaces. In exploring the way young people understand digital citizenship, it is important to acknowledge that digital spaces offer opportunities to disrupt relational structures. Networked media, such as the internet, has disrupted notions of the traditional nation-state based cultural field and citizen habitus or ways of being, offering instead opportunities for shaping the collective habitus through new interactional spaces (Vivienne et al., 2016).

I draw here upon Massey's (2005) conceptualisation of space as abstract, open, and incomplete. Space, Massey (2005) argues, is "the product of interrelations" (p. 9). Space is social, the result of interactions between individuals. As a product of 'relations-between', no two spaces will be the same. Interactions between individuals are unique, meaning space, and the experience of that space, varies for individuals. Within group settings, such as online communities, the multiple interactions between group members create multiple possibilities where "distinct trajectories co-exist" (Massey, 2005, p. 9). As a result, space is "always under construction" and always in a state of becoming (Massey, 2005, p. 9). Using Massey's conceptualisation of space, online communities may be viewed as communities of interactions and embedded practices, located in 'places' denoted by web-address Uniform Resource Locators (URLs).

Space is fluid and constantly under construction (Massey, 2005). Members of communities create shared meanings and understandings of space and place through shared interactions and embedded practices. However, this concept of shared space is not fixed and complete because it is the result of "the (shifting) sum of interactions between the actors and practices involved with them" (Rodgers, 2004, p. 283). Each member of a community is interrelating to others, creating multiple spaces and places of being and doing (Rodgers, 2004). As new members join the community, new interrelations become possible, opening



further multiple spaces of possibilities in the shared space/place. The community space becomes a “simultaneity of stories-so-far” (Massey, 2005, p. 9) and place is “the meeting point of these ongoing stories” (Rodgers, 2004, p. 290).

Space is discursive (Massey, 2005). The way we think about space shapes the possibilities of that space. Initially, discursive constructions of digital spaces were as immaterial, disembodied spaces distinct from materially-based spaces (Sunden, 2003). These views were shaped through language such as ‘cyberspace’, ‘virtual space’, and ‘online’ and ‘offline’. Yet such a dualistic approach ignores the fact that space is interrelational, and digital spaces are created through interactions and spaces-between individuals (Blanch, 2015; de Freitas, 2010; Massey, 2005). For instance, as individuals interact online, they learn new ways of being, becoming socialised in using technologies to fluidly engage in practices that reflect their way of being or habitus, in multiple spaces (Crowe & Bradford, 2006; Madge, Meek, Wellens, & Hooley, 2009; Robertson, 2009). Although digital spaces may provide opportunities for experimentation with identity performance, as individuals interact and perform their identities ‘online’, they reflect their ‘offline’ embodiment, or habitus (Sunden, 2003). Digital spaces, therefore, are not fixed, virtual realms contained as “bounded entities” separate from the ‘real’ world (Rodgers, 2004, p. 278). Instead, digital spaces are created and evolve through interrelations between individuals and mediated through digital tools. In other words, digital spaces are digitally-mediated spaces.

The discursive construction of digital space not only shapes understanding and use of digital opportunities, but also serves to construct users of digital space. As young people enact ways of being and doing in online communities, they are doing so in a space that is constructed through shared understandings and practices of ways of being and relating within that space. Each young person is at any moment, “affected by both the actions and the interpretations of others, as well as by the perceived history within which such relations operate” (Rodgers, 2004, p. 278). For instance, when use of digital space is defined through the embodiment of particular digital capital, such as the attitudes and skills of digital citizenship, the definition reflects a cultural and political worldview that serves to shape and position the habitus against that criteria as well as against historical conceptions of what it means to be citizen. Young people’s use of digitally-mediated spaces for digital citizenship

practices are therefore shaped by discursive constructions that construct digitally-mediated spaces, as well as notions of citizenship, in terms of particular ways of being and doing.

In this section, I have outlined how a focus on space as interrelational can incorporate the interactions between individuals that shape both individual and collective habitus and create fluid social spaces of practices. Incorporating understandings of space as discursively constructed contributes to understanding digital or online spaces as digitally-mediated spaces of possibilities shaped by shared socio-historical understandings. Whilst recognising digital spaces as digitally-mediated interrelational spaces, I nonetheless continue to use the terms ‘online’ and ‘offline’ in this thesis. I acknowledge that ‘online’ and ‘offline’ may seem at odds by implying a distinction between spaces, a concept I have just argued against. Yet it is also important to acknowledge that ‘online’ and ‘offline’ are terms that hold intuitive meanings through shared discursive constructions of the mode of interrelational transmission. Therefore, like Leander and McKim (2003), I acknowledge common understandings and choose to use the terms ‘online’ and ‘offline’ to denote whether interrelational spaces are digitally-mediated, or not. In order to understand how digitally-mediated spaces shape citizenship, I turn now to theorising citizenship. In the previous chapter, I outlined the way citizenship has been historically constructed. How citizenship is discursively constructed shapes the way citizen habitus and practices are understood.

## **2.4 Theorising (Digital) Citizenship**

In Chapter 1, I outlined that there has been an historical progression and deepening of citizenship, from citizenship as membership of a polity, towards citizenship as belonging and identity within multiple groups (Faulks, 2000; Heater, 2004). Citizenship is polysemic (Clarke et al., 2014). It has multiple layers and perspectives and embedded within is the notion of membership, or belonging to a community, whether that community is based upon a shared sense of nationhood, or commonality markers and shared interests (Bellamy, 2008; Dwyer, 2010; T. H. Marshall, 1950; Spoonley, Bedford, & Macpherson, 2003). Yet, there is still, for nationality and legal purposes, an underpinning concept of citizenship as connection to, and recognition by, the nation-state. Indeed, Heater (2004) argues that citizenship is tied to the nation-state, and without the nation-state the concept of citizenship is weakened. Decoupled from the state relationship, the rights and claims of modern conceptualisations of citizenship are meaningless and lack substance (Heater, 1999, 2004; Joppke, 2007). On the other hand, when acknowledged as nation-state related, the notion of

citizenship reflects the social contract between the citizens and the state. It incorporates expectations of behaviour, of duties, of rights and obligations on both sides. For the nation-state, individual citizenship practices are expected to benefit both individual and the collective nation-state-based community for the greater social good.

Traditionally, citizenship has been constructed in ‘thin’ formal terms and ‘thicker’ substantive terms (Isin & Nielson, 2013b). Formal citizenship denotes legal membership of a nation-state, either through birth-right, or through state-approved grant. Along with this formal status, citizens may also benefit from substantive citizenship, or the mutually constituted rights and responsibilities of state and citizen. These two traditional forms of citizenship are not always mutually dependent. Historically, formal citizenship has not guaranteed substantive citizenship. For instance, in New Zealand, some groups such as women, Māori, and young people, have historically experienced systematic inequalities in the type and level of citizenship and citizenship rights that they have been granted by the nation-state (see Section 1.1). Even when citizens have legal status, some groups such as young people or prisoners, have been denied substantive rights and responsibilities, such as the ability to vote in national elections. Despite formal citizenship status, some citizen identities have been constructed as lesser-than or incomplete.

Conversely, aspects of substantive citizenship may be granted to those who choose to apply to reside in a nation-state, but who carry no legal formal citizenship claim. For instance, permanent residency visas in New Zealand allow the holders to reside in New Zealand, albeit with limited rights and responsibilities, whilst retaining formal citizenship of their birth nation-state. In recent decades, some nation-states have allowed citizens to hold dual-citizenship, a move that challenges geo-political border restrictions traditionally associated with citizen status. Furthermore, the multiplicity of citizenship has continued to develop. There are now multiple ways to be a citizen and to do citizenship (Isin, 2013).

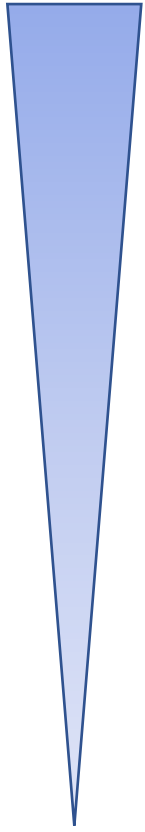
#### **2.4.1 Untangling the multiple constructions of citizenship**

I have noted previously that the Western conceptualisation of citizenship is a multi-layered and developing concept, evolving over time from geo-politically defined membership and status to encompass multiple forms of belonging and participation within multiple communities (see Chapter 1). Concepts of citizenship sit on a continuum, from ‘thin’ citizenship as a passive status based upon legal rights, to ‘thick’ citizenship, where the active

citizen belongs and participates in and with their communities and has rights and obligations towards multiple groups or communities (Faulks, 2000; Kennedy, Hahn, & Lee, 2008; Tilly, 1995). In a thick conceptualisation of citizenship, the citizen is actively engaged in multiple interactions within the community and has rights based upon membership of groups with which they identify and have the right to identify - for example as woman, mother, and student. As notions of citizenship have moved from thin to thick, the notion of connectedness, belonging, and identification with the community or group has also grown (see Table 2-1).

The various models of citizenship, set out in Table 2-1 for comparison, helped inform my analysis of data as I sought to understand how the young people in this study understood citizenship and digital citizenship. At the thin end, citizenship can be viewed as a passive, civil, legal status where rights are privileged (Faulks, 2000). Citizens do not have to do citizenship beyond possessing the legal right to be called a citizen. The political participatory model adds obligations towards fellow citizens, and the responsibility for citizens to participate in the political process. In this case, citizens do citizenship through practices of voting and becoming politically informed. As more rights and obligations are added, citizens become more interdependent and belonging deepens. The emphasis moves from the citizen's relationship with the nation-state, to a conceptualisation of citizenship that incorporates the citizen's social relationship with other citizens in groups and communities. Citizens do citizenship by being citizens who identify with various groups and enact citizenship practices that follow cultural norms. Citizenship becomes more personal for citizens and there are multiple ways of doing citizen. Citizens do citizenship through their performative practices and ways of being. Thick citizenship therefore entails a sense of social connectedness and belonging as a member of social spaces.

**Table 2-1 Models of Citizenship**

	<b>Historical Evolution</b>	<b>Gilbert (2004)</b>	<b>Mutch (2005)</b>	<b>My Model for Analysis</b>
 <p><b>Thick Citizenship</b></p>	Social Model of Citizenship. <i>Rights and obligations and a sense of belonging and identity as a member of a group; the right to have rights; many identities, many groups.</i>	Citizenship as Participation in Decision Making.	Citizenship as Identity and Belonging. <i>Many identities as a member of group(s); rights.</i>	Citizenship as Identity. <i>Recognising and being recognised as member of group(s).</i>
			Citizenship as Participation. <i>Agency; everyday practices that develop connectedness.</i>	Citizenship as Belonging. <i>Affective sense of belongingness and connectedness to place/space.</i>
			Citizenship as Public Practice. <i>Formal statutes, laws and processes, cultural norms.</i>	Citizenship as Participation. (Mutch’s Model)
	Citizenship as Civic Participation. <i>Rights and obligations of political participation for good of nation-state.</i>	Citizenship as Legal and Political Public Practice.	Citizenship as Public Practice. <i>Formal statutes, laws and processes, cultural norms.</i>	Citizenship as Public Practice. (Mutch’s Model)
		Citizenship as Identity and a Set of Moral and Democratic Virtues.	Citizenship as Democratic Ideal. <i>Participation in the democratic process.</i>	Citizenship as Democratic Ideal. (Mutch’s Model)
	Citizenship as Legal Status / Privilege. <i>Rights and duties derived from membership of civic polity.</i>	Citizenship as Status.	Citizenship as Status. <i>Membership of nation-state; passive; legal rights and responsibilities.</i>	Citizenship as Status. (Mutch’s Model)
<p><b>Thin Citizenship</b></p>				

The multiple definitions used to describe citizenship, and the multiple views these definitions represent, have led to confusion over what citizenship entails, how it may be taught, and how this aligns with the lived reality of being and acting as a citizen (MacKian, 1995; Mutch, 2005, 2013; Ratto & Boler, 2014). As a result, some scholars have attempted to clarify what citizenship may entail. For instance, Gilbert (2004) outlined a concept of citizenship with four categories: as a *status*, with associated rights and duties; as an *identity*

with a set of moral and democratic virtues; as *legal and political public practice* with shared rules about ways of being and doing; and as *participation* in decision-making. This model was then adapted by Mutch (2005) to clarify what citizenship may entail in New Zealand. Mutch splits out the concept of the democratic ideal, leading to a model with “five views of citizenship: as status; as identity; as the democratic ideal; as public practice; and as participation” (Mutch, 2013, p. 52). In this thesis, I have further adapted Mutch’s model of citizenship by pulling belonging out as a separate category to reference the affective sense of belonging and connectedness to place and space.

Mutch’s (2005, 2013) model reflects the historical evolutions of citizenship as outlined in Chapter 1. Some aspects reinforce the understanding of citizenship as linked to the nation-state, other aspects lean towards more individual understandings of citizenship. For instance, the concept of citizenship as *status* reflects the historical civic model of citizenship. It denotes the formal relationship with a nation-state that indicates membership of a national and political community and has associated substantive rights and responsibilities. This legalistic view of citizenship is encapsulated in the definitions used by nation-states to denote who is included and excluded from accessing the benefits of being a citizen.

Citizenship as a *democratic ideal* draws upon historical Western conceptualisations that citizenship entails notions of democracy and expectations of participation in the democratic process, as well as including civil and human rights. Included in this is the concept of the right to individual freedom (T. H. Marshall, 1950), incorporating rights to free speech, religious affiliation, property ownership, justice, and so on (see Section 1.1).

Similarly, the view of citizenship as *public practice* also draws upon the civic model. As Mutch (2005) notes, “citizenship as public practice refers to all the formal statutes, laws, and processes (as well as customs, traditions, and informal cultural norms) that guide behaviour within that society” (p. 51). For New Zealand citizens, these legal and discursive norms ensure that New Zealand remains a democratically governed nation with laws that uphold human rights and freedoms. For instance, both democratic ideal and public practice concepts of citizenship can be seen to underpin New Zealand’s ratification of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (UN General Assembly, 1948) and the legislation enacted within New Zealand as a result. The democratic political community of the nation-state acts to recognise and protect the human rights of its citizens.

Understanding citizenship as *identity* extends Marshall's social model of citizenship as outlined in Chapter 1 (T. H. Marshall, 1950). It extends the "passive right of status" to include "the right to have rights" (Isin & Wood, 1999, p. ix), although notably, the ability to exercise rights must usually be protected by the nation-state. As people have become more aware of the multiple communities within which they belong, they place more importance upon acknowledging their multiple identities and ways of being, although these multiple places of belonging and being may challenge the citizen relationship with the nation-state (Heater, 2004). For instance, a New Zealand citizen may self-identify as not only a New Zealander (a New Zealand citizen), but also as a citizen of their local community, as belonging to particular iwi or hapū, as belonging to a specific ethnic group, as a member of a church congregation, as member of sports groups, and/or as member of a particular social-class. As such, citizenship is more than a national identity; it encompasses multiple group affiliations, including ethnic, religious, political, and social group affiliations. Citizenship is interrelational, occurring across multiple interrelational spaces. Citizenship as identity is therefore the right to claim rights and be affiliated with multiple groups and communities, and is constructed through the way people practice it, via the challenges and acts that lead to recognition of rights for diverse groups (Isin & Wood, 1999).

The way individuals practice citizenship is at the heart of a view of citizenship as *participation*. Participatory citizenship emphasises individual agency in citizenship practices. Membership of the nation-state may confer rights upon the citizen, but citizens also have responsibilities to act in ways that will help fellow citizens. There is an expectation of citizen participation, not only in the democratic political process, but also in the everyday moments of citizenship (MacKian, 1995) that come about when living in a democratic nation-state. For New Zealanders, moments of citizenship may mean participation within political parties at national or local level, or it may be more local, such as participation in school governance through the Boards of Trustees. Many New Zealanders participate in community groups, such as sporting, charity, or social organisations, or in national and international, activist organisations such as Greenpeace. Participation as a responsibility of citizenship is about enhancing the quality of life for all citizens in the nation, "from community-mindedness to participation in local organisations, from national activism to global awareness" (Mutch, 2005, p. 51).

Citizen participation is interrelational (Isin & Wood, 1999). Moments of citizenship are created through interrelations between community members, and acts by politically defined citizens become acts of citizenship within these interrelational spaces. Indeed, MacKian (1995) argues, the everyday actions that come about through living as a member of a community, such as shopping or providing and purchasing of services, also constitute citizenship. Including these ‘informal’ moments of citizenship expands the notion of citizenship to include rights for individuals to feel safe, welcome, and able to engage with their community. Citizenship therefore further encompasses a sense of belonging and inclusion and a sense of being comfortable in interrelational spaces. As Painter and Philo (1995, p. 115) state:

If people cannot be present in public spaces (streets, squares, parks, cinemas, churches, town halls) without feeling uncomfortable, victimized and basically ‘out of place’, then it must be questionable whether or not these people can be regarded as citizens at all; or, at least, whether they will regard themselves as full citizens of their host community able to exist on an equal footing with other people who seem perfectly ‘at home’ when moving about in public spaces.

Citizenship thus incorporates not only rights and responsibilities, but also attitudes and values shaped by public norms. If moments of citizenship are not recognised as such by others, if the performance of habitus is constructed as not matching the collective habitus, then individuals will feel as ‘a fish out of water’ (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). The everyday interrelational moments of citizenship therefore have implications for the way people develop their sense of belonging and inclusion within community spaces.

#### **2.4.2 Locating citizenship as belonging to place/space**

Like citizenship, belonging is polysemic, broad, complex, and not clearly defined (Antonsich, 2010; Halse, 2018). Belonging can be both concrete and abstract, based in formal and emotional relationships (Fenster, 2007; Halse, 2018). Formally, belonging is having a recognised relationship to others, such as through formal citizenship. Emotionally, it is an emotional attachment to place and space, the “feeling ‘at home’” in a “safe space” (Yuval-Davis, 2011, p. 10), and a “deep emotional need of people” (Yuval-Davis, 2004, p. 215, as cited in Halse, 2018, p. 7). In Bourdieusian terms, emotional belonging is akin to the congruence between individual and collective habitus, the feeling of being ‘a fish in water’



(Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Belonging as a citizen is to identify, and be identified, as a member of a community, formally and/or emotionally (Calhoun, 1999; Conover, 1995; Yarwood, 2014; Yuval-Davis, 2011).

Hence, belonging is about being connected to place and space, where place is space made meaningful (Horton & Kraftl, 2013; Leach, 2002; Massey, 2005). Connections to place grow over time, through experiences and memories that become emotionally associated with place as nostalgia (Ahmed, 2000; Antonsich, 2010; Brah, 1996; Fenster, 2007). Antonsich (2010) describes this emotional sense of connection to place as ‘place-belongingness’. Nostalgic meaning, along with continuing interrelational ties to others located in place, such as relatives, strengthens the emotional connection and place-belongingness (Antonsich, 2010; Benson & Jackson, 2012). The sense of feeling ‘at home’ therefore represents the way place is given meaning by individuals, to become “a symbolic space of familiarity” (Antonsich, 2010, p. 646). Yet home is subjective as it represents the individual meaning-making of affective or emotional responses that strengthen attachment to place (Ahmed, 2000; Antonsich, 2010). Place and space thus locate belonging within social contexts.

Belonging is spatial and political. Like Bourdieu (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), Yuval-Davis (2011) conceptualises social spaces as structured through power relations. Yuval-Davis (2011, p. 13) notes that individuals are positioned within “grids of power relations” made up of intersecting social divisions. People belong to more than one social division based, for instance, on class, gender, age, and ethnicity. For individuals, some social divisions will impact upon “their specific positionings relative to others around them” more than others (Yuval-Davis, 2011, p. 9). For instance, within the larger societal context, age positions young people relative to adults. Within the context of age-related peers, other divisions, such as ethnicity, class, and gender also position the young person. How individuals make sense of their positioning and lived experiences within that positioning will shape their sense of belonging.

Each social positioning is valued differently within different contexts, depending upon the ‘social power axes’ which operate within particular contexts (Yuval-Davis, 2011). However, individuals can move along power-axes, and become newly positioned. Positionalities are “often fluid and contested” (Yuval-Davis, 2011, p. 13). For instance, if a young person gains increased access to digital technologies in the home, they may be able

to leverage this access to increase their digital literacy skills, and potentially improve employment chances in a field that values these skills. Gaining employment may then result in a young person shifting from a positioning as a school student/child, to a positioning as a young employed adult, accompanied by a subsequent change in socioeconomic status. Nonetheless, this positioning may intersect with other positionalities, such as age, gender, ethnicity, and (dis)ability, which affect the overall positioning of the individual in the power axes. Recognising the effects of positionalities allows us to recognise relational aspects of belonging through the way individuals identify, and are identified, as citizens belonging to social divisions.

Belonging is social; it “necessarily involves other people” (May, 2011, p. 370) and develops as individuals make meaning of shared practices within community space (Leach, 2002). Repeated practices become symbolic rituals of meaning that help individuals develop a sense of familiarity and belonging (Fenster, 2007; Leach, 2002). In other words, as individuals become familiar with and understand the norms of the community, there is a growing match of habitus between individual and collective, and a developing sense of belonging and connection to the community (Yuval-Davis, 2006, 2011). Furthermore, “community is something made and experienced *through* participation” [original emphasis] (Orton-Johnson, 2014, p. 151). Communities become “networks of belonging” (Fenster, 2007, p. 250), where individuals have a shared sense of being and doing created through the performance of a shared or collective habitus within interrelational spaces (Halse, 2018; Orton-Johnson, 2014). For example, different social media platforms require different practices and performances of habitus. Being a digital citizen on Facebook, with unlimited post length, requires different practices than being a digital citizen on Twitter where postings are limited in length, and different practices on Instagram, where posts are based around visual imagery. Belonging is therefore a reflexive performance of habitus across different social spaces (Yuval-Davis, 2011).

### **2.4.3 Enacting citizenship as practice and process**

While citizenship is often understood as status, or membership, citizenship is the result of enacted practices, the outcome of performed habitus (Clarke et al., 2014; Pykett, Seward, & Schaefer, 2010). It is through the claiming of substantive rights and the fulfilling of citizen obligations that citizens do the “social, political, cultural and symbolic” practices that constitute citizenship (Isin & Nielson, 2013a, p. 17). It is through doing citizenship practices,

such as voting, that we ‘become’ citizens (Isin & Nielsen, 2013; Pykett et al., 2010). In other words, what it means to be citizen moves beyond the legal status of formal citizenship, beyond the rights and responsibilities of substantive citizenship, to include the doing of citizenship practices (Isin & Nielson, 2013b). Citizens learn the norms of being citizen by following the practices of collective citizen habitus in their context. By doing citizen practices within different contexts, citizens shape their citizen habitus. Isin (2013) argues that this learning of practices shows citizenship values are learned and not inherited.

It can be argued then that citizenship develops through everyday relational practices (MacKian, 1995; Painter & Philo, 1995; Pykett et al., 2010; Yarwood, 2014). As Yarwood (2014) notes, “citizenship provides a way of analysing daily practices and linking them to political and social structures” (p. 249). In other words, through engaging in daily ritualistic practices of citizenship and making sense of their lived experiences, individuals come to understand themselves as citizens in relation to other people and place/space. For instance, young people may be encouraged to participate in youth councils yet be excluded from policy level decisions that will affect young people’s lives. Alternatively, young people may be encouraged to participate as economic citizens through employment in public spaces, such as shopping malls, yet treated with suspicion or excluded when trying to access the same public spaces for recreational purposes. As a result, young people may construe inconsistent or negative discourses about their rights and practices as an indication of their status as citizen. The concept of citizenship is always changing as individuals make meaning of their experiences of doing citizenship.

For the most part, when we conceptualise citizenship the focus is on the agentic actor performing moments of citizenship while constructing their citizen habitus. However, Isin and Nielsen (2013) argue for a focus upon the deed rather than the individual, upon the act rather than the actor. It is acts of citizenship, they argue, that produce new subjects, new beings, and new ways of being. In other words, it is what is done that creates the citizen subject. Through acts of citizenship that challenge the norms of citizenship, citizens create new ways of doing citizen and produce new citizen subjects (Isin & Nielson, 2013a).

Similarly, Asen (2004) argues that “focusing on what counts as citizenship” (p. 190) obscures the ways citizens practice citizenship and lends itself to a narrow focus evaluating previously decided acts. For instance, defining digital citizenship, and what counts as digital citizenship, prescribes “a set of activities for people to adopt” (Asen, 2004, p. 191) that limit

alternative practices of digital citizenship. Asen argues therefore, for a reorientation from ‘what’ to ‘how’ citizenship is enacted, a move he claims conceptualises citizenship as a process of doing that enables individual agency in citizenship practices and provides opportunities for creative and alternative expressions of citizenship. What then does this mean when new digitally-mediated contexts are available in which to practice citizenship?

#### **2.4.4 Constructing digitally-mediated citizenship**

Technological and political developments have complicated notions of citizenship as connection and membership. Politically, globalisation and the ability for citizens to easily move beyond geo-political borders and swap formal citizen allegiance has weakened citizen ties to the geo-political nation-state. Digital technologies, such as the internet and the development of social media, have further challenged notions of communities connected to place such as allowing individuals to join geographically-diverse communities that are based around shared norms and interests yet located in digitally-mediated spaces.

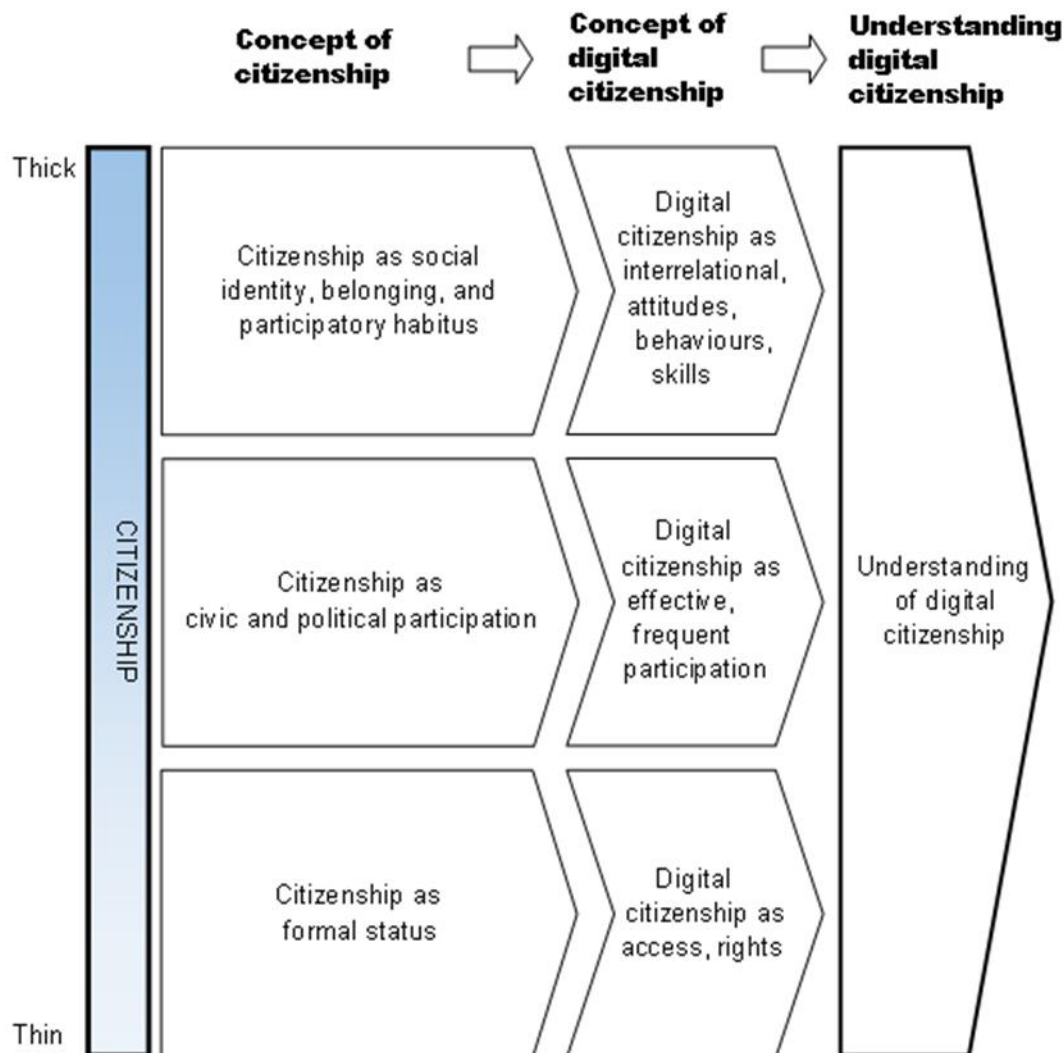
As the internet has opened new spaces of citizenship, new ways of being and doing citizenship have been made possible. As a result, a new way of thinking about citizenship that accounts for citizenship practices in digitally-mediated spaces has been labelled ‘digital citizenship’. However, the notion that ‘digital’ citizenship is different to ‘citizenship’ is a false distinction given that digital spaces are always anchored in the material and mediated through digital technologies (Blanch, 2015). Rather, ‘online’ spaces can be thought of as digitally-mediated interrelational spaces where citizens perform citizenship practices (Blanch, 2015; Massey, 2005), as I explored previously in Section 2.3. Digital citizenship, therefore, may be reconceptualised as digitally-mediated citizenship. Importantly, how we think of citizenship shapes the way we think about digital citizenship.

Each notion of citizenship gives rise to particular constructions of digital citizenship. If citizenship is viewed as a formal status that privileges rights and duties that may be taught, then technology becomes a tool that may be used to enable digitally-mediated citizenship education (Selwyn, 2007). In the same way formal citizenship denotes the right and ability to be present in place and space, and within this model, access to technology and digitally-mediated spaces are symbolic capital denoting status. Furthermore, even though digitally-mediated spaces are not necessarily tied to a geo-political place, they potentially carry similar judicial rights and obligations for citizens as physical spaces. Indeed, digitally-

mediated spaces may prompt nation-states to make judicial amendments or draft new laws to aid the enforcement of rights and obligations (Ministry of Justice, n.d.; Ting-Edwards, n.d.). Nonetheless, while a model of digital citizenship as status may imply a right to access digitally-mediated spaces, there is currently no obligation for nation-states to provide access and similarly no obligation on citizens to become proficient in the use of technologies. Digital citizenship based on a thin understanding of status is about access, not practice.

The civic participatory model of citizenship, however, incorporates expectations of political participation alongside rights and other responsibilities to society. Extrapolating this notion of citizenship to encompass digital citizenship gives rise to expected behaviours of digital participation in terms of frequency and access. For instance, Mossberger, Tolbert, et al. (2008b) use a participatory notion of citizenship to discuss digital citizenship as a citizenship practice. When viewed as practice, digital citizenship involves accessing and utilising digital capitals, such as technology, frequently in ways that enhance political and economic participation (Mossberger, Tolbert, et al., 2008b). With an emphasis on frequency and effective use, a participatory model of digital citizenship is about access, presence in digitally-mediated spaces, and ‘effective’ participation for individual and social good.

On the other hand, drawing upon the social model of citizenship, with its emphasis on belonging, gives rise to a thicker conceptualisation of digital citizenship that incorporates relational aspects such as connectedness. A social conception of digital citizenship acknowledges the interrelational aspects of digitally-mediated spaces that encourage interpersonal connections and networks. Furthermore, underpinning social model conceptualisations of digital citizenship are expectations of participatory attitudes, behaviours, and skills. In other words, a social model conceptualisation of digital citizenship is about ways of being and doing that reflect a digital citizen habitus through the embodiment of digital capital such as skills. In the same way that the social model of citizenship acknowledges interrelational spaces of doing citizen, digitally-mediated spaces offer new spaces to be a connected digitally-mediated citizen.



**Figure 2-1** Conceptualising Digital Citizenship

I have, in Figure 2-1, drawn these initial understandings together to visualise my initial conceptual thinking around digital citizenship. Although Figure 2-1 outlines the multi-layered aspect of citizenship, and the way digitally-mediated spaces offer new opportunities for a digitally-mediated citizenship, this is not enough to explain the way digital citizenship is understood by young people. Part of the complexity of citizenship is that multiple models of citizenship (outlined in Table 2.1) provide competing discourses as to ways of being and doing citizenship that shape young people's understandings of digital citizenship. In this thesis, I explore digital citizenship as a way of practicing and understanding citizenship in a digitally-mediated, globally connected society in order to understand how meaningful the concept is for young people. As such, I move between using

‘citizenship’ to denote performances of citizenship in material spaces, ‘digital citizenship’ to denote performances specific to digitally-mediated spaces, and (digital) citizenship to reflect the concept that digital citizenship encompasses citizenship practices that transmediate across spaces.

## 2.5 Young People as ‘Becoming’ Citizens

Social constructions of young people shape the way young people are expected to be and do citizen. Young people are discursively constructed and positioned as in a state of ‘becoming’ as they transition to adulthood (Lister, 2007c; Valentine, Skelton, & Chambers, 1998). They are positioned as ‘not-adult’ through the use of terminology such as ‘children’, ‘young people’, ‘adolescents’, ‘youth’, and ‘young adults’, phrases that serve to socially and historically construct young people within categories which are given variable meanings depending upon context (White et al., 2017). Commonly, these terms are read as implying chronological age bands, yet these may overlap (see Table 2-2). For instance, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) defines ‘children’ as those aged 18 years and younger (UNCRC, 1989, 20 November); ‘adolescence’ varies from 10-19 years, sometimes through to 25 years (Curtis, 2015); and the World Health Organisation variously describes ‘young adulthood’ as a range of 20-24 years, ‘youth’ as a range of 15-24 years, and the term ‘young people’ as applying to those aged 10-24 years (World Health Organisation: Regional Office for South-East Asia, 2019) (see Table 2-2). Often terms like ‘child’, ‘adolescent’, or ‘youth’ are problematically constructed around understandings of young people as immature when judged against biological developmental criteria (Prout & James, 2015; White et al., 2017). In other words, young people are socially positioned as less-than, in deficit, or lacking when compared to ‘adults’. Whichever term is utilised, the stage perceived as pre-adult is a transitional social process, where young people are positioned against adulthood, implying subsequent power inequalities (G. Jones, 2009; White et al., 2017).

Positioning young people as ‘becoming citizens’ reflects nuanced understandings of citizenship as more than formal or legal status. As citizens, young people occupy a liminal space: formal citizens in status, yet socially constructed as citizens-in-making, or ‘becoming’ citizens (Kennelly, 2011; Third & Collin, 2016; Yarwood, 2014). Under UNCRC provisions, which have been ratified by New Zealand, young people are recognised as competent, agentic individuals with rights (UNCRC, 1989, 20 November). However,

whilst a young person may be a formal citizen from birth in terms of legal status through birth-right or formal grant, substantive citizenship or the right to claim rights, is conferred at multiple chronological points in time. For instance, young people have the right to be employed and participate economically in society from a young age. Regardless of age, they must register as taxpayers, but do not gain legal protection for minimum pay rates until they are 16 years old (Government Information Services, 2019), and cannot participate in the electoral vote until 18 years of age. Each additive substantive right constructs the way young people are expected to participate as citizens and serves to reinforce constructions of young people as not-yet full citizens, as claimants of rights with responsibilities to the state, but with limited participation and representation in the political arena.

Young people therefore receive competing discursive messages about what it is to be a citizen based upon age and presumptions of competence. They may be constructed and expected to perform as either active, participatory agents, or alternatively passive and dependent members of the community (Lister, 2007c). However, for young people to be recognised as active citizens, they must first be recognised as holding legitimate rights within society, as well as be considered competent and capable of agency and active participation (Lister, 2007c). Nonetheless, as Lister (2007c) argues, “citizenship as rights enables people to act as agents . . . citizenship as a practice represents an expression of human agency” (p. 695). As agents, young people’s everyday participatory actions become moments of citizenship. Through citizenship practices, young New Zealanders can take up an identity as citizen.

Young people’s expressions of agency and performance of citizenship practices challenge social hierarchies and their positioning as ‘becoming’ citizens. Young people’s actions are frequently viewed negatively, seen as the intemperate result of developmental hormonal variations and undue peer influences (Moje & van Helden, 2004). For instance, ‘youth’ and ‘adolescents’ are often constructed as socially problematic, ‘at-risk’, troubled, and rebelling against social norms (Messias, Jennings, Fore, McLoughlin, & Parra-Medina, 2007; Valentine, 1996). Consequently, young people’s actions and interactions, especially in public spaces, are often the target of attempts by adults to restrict and control activities (Beals & Wood, 2012; Lincoln, 2012; Valentine et al., 1998). Adults thus seek to control young people’s access and participation within spaces and in doing so, reinforce power hierarchies.



Social constructions of ‘at-risk’ young people have been reinforced as young people begin to interact within digitally-mediated spaces. Digital technologies allow young people to participate in and belong to spaces that may exclude adults and thus make adult oversight and control more difficult (Marwick, 2012; Marwick & boyd, 2011). Young people use digitally-mediated spaces, especially social media, to interact with friends, shape and perform identity, and seek entertainment (boyd, 2014; Holmes, 2009). However, reports of negative experiences, such as instances of bullying and exploitation, as well as concerns over privacy, have fuelled moral panic over the ways young people access and participate within digitally-mediated spaces (Cassell & Cramer, 2008; Gabriel, 2014; Holmes, 2009; Marwick & boyd, 2011; Mesch, 2009). In that vein, calls for young people to learn digital citizenship could be read as attempting to shape young people’s participatory behaviours online and in doing so, address adult concerns. Thus, teaching digital citizenship raises issues about who can exercise the power to define what counts as appropriate behaviours and participation and what the digital citizen habitus entails, points that were raised by the young people in this study (see Chapter 5).

This study involved participants aged 16-25 years, an age range that falls across several common groupings. Although I recognise that there are potential negative discursive constructions associated with developmentally-based terminology, I have chosen to refer to the participants as ‘young people’, or ‘young adults’, both terms which I feel forefront the participants as people with their own capabilities and rights, and terms with which the participants were comfortable.

## **2.6 Summary**

Citizenship is not only socially constructed in multiple ways but is also experienced and performed in multiple spaces by young people who are themselves discursively constructed. In this chapter I have outlined the theoretical approach that I am utilising to explore how meaningful the concept of digital citizenship is to young people. I have drawn upon concepts of discourses, Bourdieusian understandings of social spaces and ways of being, along with notions of interrelational spaces to provide a basis for theoretical and discursive understandings of citizenship.

Drawing upon multiple theoretical strands offers a more nuanced lens through which to examine young people’s understanding of ways of being and doing citizenship across

multiple spaces. Although the theoretical strands I have drawn upon may appear conflicting at first, differences may be thought of as issues of terminology with similarities between concepts. For instance, Massey (2005) conceptualises space as a product of interrelations, “always under construction” (Massey, 2005, p. 9). Massey argues that space constitutes, and is constituted through, the interactions between identities, through the practices and connections and interrelations-between, and it is those interactions and practices that give space meaning. Similarly, Wacquant (Wacquant & Akçaoğlu, 2017) argues that, for Bourdieu, social space is the overarching space within which there are multiple, fluid and dynamic fields and sub-fields which have meaning as sites of practice. Moreover, for Bourdieu, fields are spaces that have meaning constituted through practices. Although Massey and Bourdieu are using different terminology, fields are both material and metaphorical spaces that are fluid and dynamic. Whilst Bourdieu is trying to provide a structure to understand spaces, Massey allows us to understand that those spaces are not rigidly structured.

To understand how meaning is constituted within spaces or fields, I have incorporated concepts of habitus and discourse. Habitus is the way of knowing how to inhabit the field, whilst discourses shape the way social spaces are structured as fields and the way individuals are positioned within those spaces in relation to capital and power. Habitus and discourses interact to shape practices and shape spaces. Discourses are ways of knowing and doing that are internalised as habitus, and then shape practices and interrelations-between which serve to further shape the field as dominant discourses are either reproduced or challenged. In other words, discourses offer a way to consider how habitus is shaped and habitus offers a way to understand how discourses are taken-up and reproduced as ways of knowing and doing. Considering habitus and discourses together helps us understand that meaning-making is not a simplistic top-down affair because, as the young people in this study showed, individuals can push back against normative official discourses.

For young people, discourses shape habitus, and the ways young people learn to be and do citizen. When individuals encounter a space that shares their way of being, they develop a sense of belongingness that shapes the way they do citizenship in that context. Considering belongingness offers ways to understand citizenship as a process located in place and space. In digitally-mediated spaces, discourses shape expectations of young

people's practices and subsequent lived experiences. Furthermore, as outlined in sections 2.3 and 2.4.4, digital spaces are anchored in the material and mediated through digital technologies (Blanch, 2015). Throughout this thesis, I move between using 'citizenship' to denote performances of citizenship in material spaces, 'digital citizenship' to denote performances specific to digitally-mediated spaces, and (digital) citizenship to reflect the concept that digital citizenship encompasses citizenship practices across material and digital spaces. Digital citizenship can therefore be understood as the doing of citizenship practices in digital spaces via digital technologies, whilst (digital) citizenship can be understood as encompassing citizenship practices that transmediate across spaces.

In the next chapter, I provide a review of the literature that informs this thesis. I examine the way digital citizenship is defined in the literature; how young people learn to be and do (digital) citizen; and explore discourses around young people's use of digitally-mediated spaces.

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## **Chapter 3: Be(com)ing and Doing (Digital) Citizen: Literature Review**

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This chapter aims to outline research pertinent to this thesis around young people's ways of being and doing (digital) citizenship. Like citizenship, there are multiple understandings of what digital citizenship entails (Law, Chow, & Fu, 2018). Indeed, Vivienne et al. (2016) note that, "definitions of digital citizenship are always already under negotiation, embedded in a multi-dimensional web of power, discourse and emergent meanings . . . many things to many people" (p. 15). By implication, digital citizenship requires being able to access digitally-mediated spaces and utilise, at least to some extent, digital technologies as tools if individuals wish to participate in online spaces.

In the previous chapter, I outlined the theoretical underpinnings that have shaped the research process. I clarified how I draw upon concepts of space and place, as well as transmediated interactions in the spaces between, to explicate a conceptualisation of digital citizenship, not as separate from lived citizenship, but as digitally-mediated ways of being and doing citizenship practices. Reconceptualising 'digital' citizenship as 'digitally-mediated' citizenship (or (digital) citizenship) highlights that how we understand what it means to be a citizen and do citizenship practices shapes the way we understand what it means to be a digital citizen and do digital citizenship practices.

Within this chapter, I explore the various ways the literature defines, shapes, and locates digital citizenship (Section 3.1). Using the theoretical lens discussed in the previous chapter (Chapter 2), I outline how digital citizenship is constructed through the literature as particular ways of being and doing in online spaces and how different understandings of digital citizenship value different citizenship capitals and habitus. In Section 3.2, I outline the New Zealand context for citizenship and research on how young people learn to be and do (digital) citizen. In the last section, I look at research about the ways that young people are using digitally-mediated spaces as part of their digital citizenship practices and how young people are constructed as users of digital spaces (Section 3.3). Digitally-mediated practices are not always considered in terms of digital citizenship in the literature. One of the important components of this chapter is to incorporate relevant literature that considers digital citizenship practices, even if not overtly identified as such.

### 3.1 Understanding Digital Citizenship in Digital Spaces

Digital technologies have created opportunities for people to access digital spaces and form their own communities of belonging (Law et al., 2018), challenging traditional notions of citizenship in relation to the nation-state. As interrelational digitally-mediated spaces such as social media sites have become more popular, increasing consideration has been given to the role of citizenship, and how citizenship is practiced, in digitally-mediated spaces (Choi, 2016; Choi, Glassman, & Cristol, 2017). Numerous terms, such as ‘netizen’ (Alport & Macintyre, 2007; Hauben & Hauben, 1998; Robertson, 2009), ‘e-citizen’ (S. Coleman, 2008; Johnson, 2015), ‘networked citizen’ (Loader, Vromen, & Xenos, 2014), ‘cybercitizen’ (Berson & Berson, 2004), and ‘digital native’ (Prensky, 2010; Selwyn, 2009a) have been created to describe ‘self-actualising’ citizens (W. L. Bennett, 2008a, 2008b; Robertson, 2009) who are “socialised in online spaces . . . [as] ‘new’ mobile citizens” (Robertson, 2009, p. 287). Increasingly, the term ‘digital citizenship’ is being used to consider the ways people, especially young people, engage and participate as citizens online.

There is some disparity in the ways of being and doing that are constructed as digital citizenship, reflecting the differing conceptions of citizenship. For instance, digital citizenship is positioned variously as access (Mossberger, Tolbert, et al., 2008b; Oyedemi, 2012), participation (Buente, 2015; Mossberger, Tolbert, et al., 2008b), behaviours, attitudes, and values (Ohler, 2010), or a combination of these intersecting aspects (Ribble, 2011, 2012); it is these divisions I shall focus on in this chapter. However, it is important to note that digital citizenship may also be considered as political. Frequently when discussing digitally-mediated citizenship, traditional notions of citizenship as the democratic ideal (Mutch, 2005, 2013) are invoked. Falk (2011), for instance, draws upon civic and political concepts to define digital citizenship as “connection, communication and collaboration”, in particular the “technology enabled interaction between citizens and government” (p. 157). Vromen (2017) highlights the potential for digital citizens to engage in new forms of political action via social media. Isin and Ruppert (2015) draw upon ‘the political citizen’ to focus on the everyday performance and practice of digital citizenship as a form of “political struggle” (p. 2) that occurs through acts of citizenship and rights claims. In a similar vein, Vivienne et al. (2016) draw together multiple authors to structure digital citizenship as acts of citizenship within processes of control (or governance), contest (challenging attempts to control), and culture (new ways of doing citizenship). Meanwhile,

Emejulu and McGregor (2016) argue for digital education to re-politicise digital citizenship with a commitment to social justice, whilst others (Drakopoulou, Grossman, & Moore, 2016; Powell & Henry, 2017; Sullivan, 2016) invite governance and legal processes to protect the freedoms and rights of digital citizens. Underpinning these aspects are discourses of rights and discursive constructions of ways of being and doing.

### **3.1.1 Digital citizenship as access to digital spaces**

At its core, digital citizenship as a digitally-mediated form of citizenship means being able to access and participate in digitally-mediated spaces. Digital citizenship is about the individual citizen having the right to access digitally-mediated spaces (Oyedemi, 2012, 2015a), having a habitus that enables access and participation, as well as having the necessary capitals to access digitally-mediated spaces. For instance, Oyedemi (2012) used the concept of digital citizenship as a right to internet access to explore the availability of the internet in South Africa. He found that skewed access to the internet reflected wider social inequalities and led to citizens who were only ‘partially digital’, prevented by limited internet access and digital skills from fully participating as citizens (Oyedemi, 2012, 2015a). Access to online content has been recognised as important for citizen participation, with the United Nations declaration in 2011 that “the Internet can be an important tool for fostering citizen and civil society participation” (United Nations Human Rights Council Resolution 32/L.20). The United Nations subsequently declared that access to the internet should be considered a human right (United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, 2011, October 21). Nonetheless, access to the internet and digitally-mediated spaces may be limited by available economic and cultural resources. The degree of access an individual has will shape how they access information and digitally-located communities and therefore shape their citizenship participation (Servaes, 2003). Access to digitally-mediated spaces becomes a symbolic status that differentiates those who have access and those who do not.

Inequalities in access fuel the ‘digital divide’, the gap between those who can effectively access and participate in digitally-mediated spaces, and those who cannot. Barriers to participation arise due to socioeconomic status, age, and varying degrees of digital literacies. Mossberger, Tolbert, McNeal, and King (2008), for instance, report on 2006 PEW Internet Project statistics showing that 16% of the U.S. population had no interest in using the internet. By 2013, the PEW Internet Project reported that, of the 15% of American adults who did not use the internet for various reasons, 34% felt the internet was

not relevant and they were not interested (Zickuhr, 2013). A further 32% cited usability of internet resources as a reason for not having access, and 19% cited costs (Zickuhr, 2013). Even when access is available, some people may remain disinterested in using digital technologies and accessing the internet (Bascand, 2013; Mossberger, Tolbert, McNeal, et al., 2008).

Similar results have been reported in New Zealand. The *2012 Household use of Information and Communication Technology* statistics identified that 20% of New Zealand households did not have access to the internet at home (Bascand, 2013). Several reasons for a lack of internet access were cited by those surveyed. For instance, almost half (46%) of those New Zealanders with no internet access at home claimed a lack of interest (Bascand, 2013). It is important, however, that a lack of digital access and participation is not portrayed as individual choice distinct from wider factors, such as geographical, economic, or educational inequalities. For 36% of those New Zealanders over 18 with no internet access, the reason cited for no access was concerns over costs. A further 14% cited usability of technologies, or a lack of confidence and skills, as a reason for not having internet access at home (Bascand, 2013). However, the 2017 World Internet Project New Zealand (WIPNZ) survey reported that by 2017 only 6% of New Zealanders were non-users, these being predominantly over 65 years old (Díaz Andrade, Hedges, Karimikia, & Techatassanasoontorn, 2018). WIPNZ found that over 97% of all age groups under 65 used the internet. Nonetheless, reasons for non-use continued to be dominated by a lack of interest (42%), a lack of material and economic resources (24%), and a lack of confidence (21%) (Díaz Andrade et al., 2018). Restricted access due to geographic factors, economic factors, and/or inadequate digital literacy skills pose equity issues for citizens who may subsequently be unable to fully participate as digital citizens. Additionally, providing internet access is meaningless if people lack the habitus and digital skills and capabilities to take advantage of that access (Mossberger, Tolbert, et al., 2008b; Shelley et al., 2004).

Factors such as material access to the internet, in terms of the connection speed and devices used, shape the way people use and benefit from the internet (Napoli & Obar, 2014; Pearce & Rice, 2013; M. J. Stern, Adams, & Elsasser, 2009; van Deursen & van Dijk, 2019). For instance, van Deursen and van Dijk (2019) found that, in the Netherlands, economic and educational capital are related to material resources and the diversity of internet-capable devices people owned. How people access the internet in terms of material devices is



important, as the quality, diversity, and quantity of internet access and experiences, such as whether primary access is via smartphone, tablet, or computer, impacts upon the way people use the internet and the skills they develop (boyd, 2014; Hargittai, 2010; Napoli & Obar, 2014). Internet users using mobile devices tend towards less information seeking or content creation than desktop computer users (Napoli & Obar, 2014). Furthermore, the way people use the affordances, or functionalities of mobile devices varies according to previous computer experience, with those who were more experienced internet users via computers making greater use of the limited abilities of the mobile devices (Napoli & Obar, 2014; Pearce & Rice, 2013). While a young person may access the internet frequently from a smartphone, the limited affordances of the smartphone as an access point restricts the digital skills the young person can develop and the way that young person develops digital competencies or digital capital (boyd, 2014; Hargittai, 2010). How citizens access and use digital technologies reflects, and contributes to, their development of skills and the ways they are able to do citizenship practices online.

### **3.1.2 Digital citizenship as participation and digital skills**

In their seminal 2008 work, Mossberger, Tolbert, et al. (2008b) draw upon traditional notions of citizenship as political and economic participation and practice to construct digital citizenship in the United States context. Digital citizens are constructed as those citizens who engage in citizenship practices via digitally-mediated technologies, especially out of the home. Mossberger, Tolbert, and McNeal (2008a) begin by describing digital citizenship as “the ability to participate in society online” (p. 1) before defining digital citizens as “those who use the internet regularly and effectively – that is, on a daily basis” (p. 1). Indeed, later in the same work, Mossberger, Tolbert, McNeal, et al. (2008) claim daily internet use as “our proxy for digital citizenship” (p. 107). Mossberger, Tolbert, et al. (2008b) argue that frequent use is an indication that digital citizens possess both the necessary economic capital to access the internet, as well as the digital capital in terms of skills and capability, to effectively utilise the benefits offered by the internet for civic engagement and economic gain. Conversely, infrequent use may indicate individuals do not possess the capital to effectively participate in digitally-mediated spaces. Furthermore, Mossberger, Tolbert, et al. (2008b) argue that people can increase their digital skills with regular internet use, and thus be able to more fully take advantage of the resources available via the internet. In other words, using economic and digital capitals for online citizenship practices enables

individuals to gain further capitals, and provides both individual and societal economic and participatory benefits.

Defining digital citizenship by usage is problematic, however, as frequent use does not necessarily mean ‘effective’ use (a term that is also not clearly defined, but seemingly refers to using the internet to access information in order to be socially, politically, and economically engaged). For instance, a young person who is on the internet several times a day to passively consume entertainment media via their smartphone is not likely to develop further digital skills through that activity that will enhance their ‘effective’ use of the internet (D’Haenens, Koeman, & Saeys, 2007). Despite Mossberger, Tolbert, et al.’s (2008b) focus upon regular, frequent use, digital citizenship requires some initial digital capital, such as digital skills, to be able to access and take advantage of the benefits the internet offers. Multiple factors, such as having economic and digital capitals to access digitally-mediated spaces, shape the frequency of internet usage and the ability to be and do digital citizen (see for example, Greenhow, Walker, & Kim, 2009; Hassani, 2006; Mossberger, Tolbert, et al., 2008b; Oyedemi, 2015b; M. J. Stern et al., 2009).

In an increasingly digitally-mediated society, technology use is both an opportunity as well as necessity for full participation. Access and use of the internet makes available educational opportunities and employment databases, providing increased employment prospects (Hargittai & Hinnant, 2008; Mossberger, Tolbert, et al., 2008b). Accordingly, Mossberger, Tolbert, et al. (2008a) argue that “in the information age, digital citizenship may rival formal education in its importance for economic opportunity” (p. 5). Drawing upon survey data from the United States, Mossberger, Tolbert, et al. (2008b) found that internet usage increases economic capital. As a result, use of the internet in the workplace was linked to higher income (Brynin, 2006; Mossberger, Tolbert, et al., 2008b). In other words, those that have the skills, or digital capital, to utilise the internet stand to benefit the most economically. As a result, disparities in internet usage may reflect and potentially exacerbate existing divisions in society (Oyedemi, 2012, 2015b; Shelley et al., 2004).

The need for digital capabilities and skills, such as digital literacy has been widely recognised in research on internet use (see for example, boyd, 2014; Buente, 2015; Emejulu & McGregor, 2016; Hargittai, 2002; Hargittai & Hinnant, 2008; Livingstone, 2007; Livingstone & Helsper, 2010; Mossberger, Tolbert, et al., 2008b; van Deursen, 2012; van Deursen & van Dijk, 2011, 2013). As boyd (2014) notes, “although it is not necessary to be

technically literate to participate, those with limited technical literacy aren't necessarily equipped to be powerful citizens of the digital world" (boyd, 2014, p. 183). boyd argues that young people require an understanding of the technology they use in order to fully understand and utilise the affordances offered to actively participate and contribute in a digitally-mediated world.

The link between internet usage and digital skills, and the ability this provides to optimise benefits, has been noted by other authors, although they do not refer to these in terms of 'digital citizenship' (see for example, D'Haenens et al., 2007; Hargittai & Hinnant, 2008; Livingstone & Helsper, 2010; Ono & Zavodny, 2007; Selwyn, 2009b; Selwyn, Gorard, & Furlong, 2005; van Deursen & van Dijk, 2013). Instead, the focus has been on the way inequalities caused by varying levels of digital skills and usage, result in a 'digital divide'. Nonetheless, they examine digital practices that reflect ways of being and doing citizenship online. For instance, like Mossberger, Tolbert, et al. (2008b), Hargittai and Hinnant (2008) linked frequency of internet usage and the development of digital capitals such as skills. Analysing usage data from 270 young adults in the United States, they found that young adults who frequently and regularly used the internet, reported higher levels of internet knowledge and skills than those who used the internet less frequently. This led them to conclude that regularly being online meant people would further develop their digital capital by becoming more familiar and comfortable with the affordances of the medium (Hargittai & Hinnant, 2008). Hargittai and Hinnant (2008) caution, however, that it is the quality of activities that people engage in online, rather than the quantity, which is most important in developing skills.

Similarly, a large body of literature has linked the types of activities that individuals engage in online to educational level and benefit gain from internet usage (see for example, D'Haenens et al., 2007; Livingstone & Helsper, 2010; Ono & Zavodny, 2007; Selwyn, 2009b; Selwyn et al., 2005; van Deursen & van Dijk, 2013). More highly educated users gain the most benefit from internet usage (Hargittai & Hinnant, 2008; Hargittai, Piper, & Morris, 2018; van Deursen & van Dijk, 2013). For example, in the Netherlands, van Deursen and van Dijk (2013) found that, although unemployed people with low levels of education were more frequent and persistent users of the internet, their usage tended to revolve around entertainment-based activities, such as socialising and gaming. In contrast, experienced, and more highly educated internet users were more likely to access informative capital-

enhancing websites, such as news sites, and use the internet more effectively and to greater benefit (van Deursen & van Dijk, 2013). Higher levels of education, along with “information and strategic internet skills” (van Deursen & van Dijk, 2011, p. 908), allow for more efficient content searching and evaluation of information (van Deursen, 2012), and render more benefit to the user. Educational capital and digital capital intersect to shape the way people use digitally-mediated spaces to gain further capitals.

Although much of the research exploring the ways people use digital spaces does not use the term ‘digital citizenship’, a look at empirical research highlights how the definition of digital citizenship offered by Mossberger, Tolbert, et al. (2008b) is problematic. Although Mossberger, Tolbert, et al. (2008b) emphasise participation in society, the focus is on individual usage, skills, and individualistic gain. A focus on frequency of use, over inequalities in physical and material access, ignores the realities for many that constrain participation in digital spaces, such as economic or geographical restrictions. Similarly, equating frequency of use to possessing and developing digital capital in terms of skills and competencies ignores the multiple ways people may participate in digitally-mediated spaces and assumes that quantity of usage equals quality, which wider research disproves (D’Haenens et al., 2007; Hargittai & Hinnant, 2008; Hargittai et al., 2018; Livingstone & Helsper, 2010; Ono & Zavodny, 2007; Selwyn, 2009b; Selwyn et al., 2005; van Deursen & van Dijk, 2013). Digital citizenship needs to take into account the ways people are participating in digitally-mediated spaces and building connections and belonging, rather than the frequency of that participation.

### **3.1.3 Digital citizenship as behaviours, attitudes, and values**

Citizenship and/or digital citizenship is about belonging to communities and understanding the behaviours and norms expected in those communities (Ohler, 2010). With a sense of community comes a sense of expectation in terms of how members treat, and are treated by, others (Bellamy, 2008; Dwyer, 2010; Faulks, 2000; T. H. Marshall, 1950). Yet digitally-mediated communities mean that the effects of our actions and interactions may be felt beyond ourselves and our geo-locality (Ohler, 2010). Consequently, there is a need to consider the citizen’s role in globally connected digitally-mediated communities when defining digital citizenship (Ohler, 2010). Indeed, Ohler (2010), argues that conceptualising digital citizenship offers an opportunity to redefine citizenship for the ‘Digital Age’.

Ohler (2010) argues that digital communities, like offline communities, are “defined in terms of membership, ethos, and purpose” (Ohler, 2010, p. 43) and citizenship represents “doing what is right and responsible within a given social context” (Ohler, 2010, Intro. para. 7). Although also based in a U.S. context, unlike Mossberger, Tolbert, et al.’s (2008b) individualistic approach, Ohler (2010) draws upon notions of citizenship as interrelational shared practices that recognise the responsibilities and obligations of being a member of a community that adapts to changing socio-historical contexts (Faulks, 2000; Fenster, 2007; Halse, 2018; Kennedy et al., 2008; Tilly, 1995). From this understanding, digital citizenship is about forming a personal sense of who we are in the ‘new’ context of digitally-mediated spaces and developing “a personal ethical core that can guide us in areas of experience that are in many ways unfamiliar” (Ohler, 2010, Intro. para. 14). However, the digitally-mediated environment, including social media, continues to evolve and pose challenging decisions for young people. Digital citizens, therefore, need to learn to balance content-creation and consumption, rights and responsibilities, and multiple discourses of risk and opportunity whilst navigating digitally-mediated spaces (boyd, 2014; Ohler, 2010).

Drawing upon the idea that citizenship can be taught (Isin, 2013; Mutch, 2005), Ohler (2010) focusses on the need for the formal education system to teach young people how to be digital citizens (boyd, 2014; Ribble, 2011, 2012; Ribble & Miller, 2013; Selwyn, 2009a). Acknowledging education’s role in teaching digital citizenship recognises that students’ ways of being in digitally-mediated spaces is not a separate aspect of their lives, but instead may be considered a digitally-mediated form of habitus. The notion of teaching for digital citizenship is also in contrast to problematic constructions of young people as ‘digital natives’ (Martinez & Prensky, 2011; Prensky, 2001, 2010) who are perceived as having ‘caught’ a digital habitus and digital capital by growing up surrounded by digital technologies. Problematically, the rhetoric of ‘digital natives’ allows adults to avoid the responsibility for teaching young people ways of being digital citizens (boyd, 2014; Martinez & Prensky, 2011). As boyd (2014) notes, “if we view skills and knowledge as inherently generational, then organized efforts to achieve needed forms of literacy are unnecessary” (p. 197) because eventually a digitally literate generation will be born. Nonetheless, rather than assume that being surrounded by technology imparts some innate knowledge, young people need to be taught how to navigate digitally-mediated spaces (boyd, 2014; Ohler, 2010; Ribble, 2011, 2012). Education therefore plays a role in shaping

habitus and imparting digital capital for digital citizens to participate in digitally-mediated spaces.

Several issues arise when advocating teaching digital citizenship. Firstly, digital technologies and the affordances offered evolve rapidly and it may be difficult for educators to stay abreast of what is available, and how it is being used (Ohler, 2010, 2011). However, Ohler (2010; 2011) argues that educators do not need to be more competent than students using technology because their role is to guide students in the ‘when and why’ of using technology and to foster safe and responsible use of digital technologies. In other words, the goal for educators should be to encourage young people to consider how they use digital technologies and develop critical literacy skills, rather than prescribing actions for specific contexts. Educators therefore need to develop their own ethical framework with regard to digital resources in order to effectively model digital citizenship (Ohler, 2010).

Secondly, educators’ and parents’ understandings of what are appropriate digital behaviours and practices are frequently defined through traditional dominant discourses around normative ways of being and doing citizen. For instance, many parents and educators were themselves educated to become ‘dutiful’ citizens who engaged in traditional civic and political activities, such as voting, and have internalised the traditional nature of the relationship between nation-state and citizen (Banaji & Buckingham, 2013; W. L. Bennett, 2008a). On the other hand, young people are using digitally-mediated spaces for alternative and less formal political practices that better align with their interests (Banaji & Buckingham, 2013; Cohen & Kahne, 2012; Dahlgren & Olsson, 2007; Literat & Kligler-Vilenchik, 2018; Livingstone, Couldry, & Markham, 2007; Loader, 2007; Loader et al., 2014; Vromen, 2011). Ohler argues, therefore, that the fundamental aspect is to treat digital citizenship as “character education for the Digital Age” (Ohler, 2010, p. 180; 2011). In other words, for Ohler, teaching digital citizenship is about developing and planning a programme to teach young people values and ethics of citizenship within their (digitally-mediated) communities to foster safe and responsible participation in digitally-mediated spaces (Ohler, 2010, 2011).

A further issue with prescribing ‘character education’ that focusses on behaviours, is that rhetoric around digital citizenship is fuelled by moral panics and discourses of risk and acceptable use (Cassell & Cramer, 2008; Gabriel, 2014; Holmes, 2009; Marwick & boyd, 2011; Mesch, 2009). Educators and parents are often influenced by moral panics in

the media that focus on discourses of risk around young people's use of digital technologies (boyd, 2014; W. Clark, Logan, Luckin, Mee, & Oliver, 2009; Herring, 2008; Holmes, 2009; Hope, 2014; Livingstone & Helsper, 2010; Ohler, 2010; Selwyn, 2011; Valentine & Holloway, 2001). Indeed, Ohler (2010) argues that "currently digital citizenship is being defined largely in terms of the issues that seem to confuse and confound our sense of what's right" (p. 17), such as copyright issues, cyberbullying, and cybersafety or the protection of young people online. Consequently, educational approaches may tend to focus on teaching students technical aspects of how to use technology and prescribing how and what young people should do to avoid misuse, rather than encouraging attitudes and behaviours that allow young people to fully engage with opportunities offered by digital technologies (Green & Bailey, 2010). When schools act to protect students from perceived risks, for example by limiting internet access, they limit the benefits offered by internet resources and miss the opportunity to educate students in appropriate behaviours (W. Clark et al., 2009; Green & Bailey, 2010; Huijser, 2008; Ohler, 2010). When we consider that much of a student's digital technology use may take place away from school (boyd, 2014; C. Davies & Eynon, 2013; Lincoln, 2014), addressing behaviours becomes an important factor in digital citizenship education.

### **3.1.4 Digital citizenship as normative**

Providing 'teaching solutions' to encourage "productive and responsible users of digital technologies" is also the aim of U.S. educator, Mike Ribble (2011, Intro, para. 8). Ribble offers the most widely adopted definition of digital citizenship to date, having developed a programme for educators and students which is influential throughout the United States and globally. He defines a citizen through status and relationship to the nation-state, before going on to describe, like Mossberger, Tolbert, et al. (2008b), a digital citizen as one who participates and contributes by using digital technology for the benefit of society. Digital citizenship can be understood as "the norms of appropriate, responsible behavior with regard to technology use" (Ribble, 2011, Ch. 1, para. 4). For Ribble, participating and contributing as a digital citizen therefore involves respecting, educating, and protecting both yourself and others (Ribble & Miller, 2013).

Like Ohler (2010), Ribble approaches digital citizenship from an educationalist stance and a belief that digital technology use can be an opportunity for young people if they are taught to use it responsibly. Ribble (2011) outlines nine elements that he argues represent

the “norms” for technology use: digital access; digital commerce; digital communication; digital literacy; digital etiquette; digital law; digital rights and responsibilities; digital health and wellness; and digital security or self-protection (see Table 3-1). Ribble argues that understanding these principles provides digital users with the flexibility to adapt to changing technologies and become fully-fledged productive and responsible digital citizens.

**Table 3-1** *Ribble's Nine Elements of Digital Citizenship*

Category	Element	Meaning	Core question
Respect yourself / Respect others	Digital etiquette	Electronic standards of conduct or procedure.	Do users consider others when using digital technologies?
	Digital access	Full electronic participation in society.	Can all users participate in a digital society at acceptable levels if they choose?
	Digital law	Electronic responsibility for actions and deeds.	Are users aware of laws (rules, policies) that govern the use of digital technologies?
Educate yourself / Educate others	Digital communication	Electronic exchange of information.	Do users understand the various digital communication methods and when each is appropriate?
	Digital literacy	Process of teaching and learning about technology and the use of technology.	Have users taken the time to learn about digital technologies and do they share that knowledge with others?
	Digital commerce	Electronic buying and selling of goods.	Do users have the knowledge and protection to buy and sell in a digital world?
Protect yourself / Protect others	Digital rights and responsibilities	Those requirements and freedoms extended to everyone in a digital world.	Are users ready to protect the rights of others and to defend their own digital rights?
	Digital security (self-protection)	Electronic precautions to guarantee safety.	Do users take the time to protect their information while taking precautions to protect others' data as well?
	Digital health and wellness	Physical and psychological well-being in a digital technology world.	Do users consider the risks (both physical and psychological) when using digital technologies?

Table adapted from Ribble, M. (2011). *Digital citizenship in schools [Kindle Edition]*. Retrieved from [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com); and from Ribble, M., & Miller, T. N. (2013). Educational leadership in an online world: connecting students to technology responsibly, safely, and ethically. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks*, 17, 137+.

While Ribble (2011) does not reference political participation or the democratic ideal (Mutch, 2005), it is possible to see the influence of traditional models of citizenship within



his nine elements. For instance, in outlining the need for access, along with associated rights and responsibilities, we can see the traditional notion of citizenship as status and privilege from being a member of a community associated with place/space (Mutch, 2005, 2008). Similarly, Ribble's outlining of the element of digital law is reminiscent of the concept of public practice and the laws and norms that govern behaviour (Mutch, 2005). Meanwhile, underpinning all elements are notions of citizenship as participation and practice, which fuel connectedness and belonging (Mutch, 2005).

Nevertheless, Ribble's (2011) approach is problematic for several reasons. Interestingly, although it is widely adopted by educators, it is also the least academically robust, drawing mainly upon media sources and websites. It should be noted, however, that whilst these sources are non-academic, it is likely that they reflect dominant social discourses given that media plays a role in reflecting and shaping discursive constructions of technology use. Ribble's 'norms' of technology use, therefore, may be understood as reflecting and re-producing dominant discourses of young people's use of digital technologies, including the moral panics arising from discourses of risk.

Similarly, Ribble potentially reinforces perceptions of digitally-mediated (online) spaces as a distinct and separate place for online interactions by referring to the 'digital world', and the 'real world' (Ribble, 2011, Ch. 1: The new citizenship, para. 1). Although he argues that young people now need to be prepared to be global citizens, and that digital technology is "ingrained in our society" (Ribble, 2011, Ch. 1: The new citizenship, para. 3), the rhetoric used re-presents discursive notions of digital space as distinct from materially-based space (Sunden, 2003) which ignores the interrelational aspects of digitally-mediated spaces (Blanch, 2015; de Freitas, 2010; Massey, 2005).

Furthermore, definitions of digital citizenship and citizenship reflect an adult-centric view of participation and what it means to be a citizen. Framing digital citizenship in terms of prescriptive criteria or practices that young people need to learn serves to frame young people as 'becoming' citizens. In doing so it works to "(re)secure existing relations of power" (Graham, 2007, p. 198; see also Foucault, 1972). In other words, outlining criteria for the field of digital citizenship frames digital citizenship as a status to be defined by others, in this case the nation-state and its adult actors.

### 3.2 Learning to Be and Do (Digital) Citizen

Modern social models of citizenship value inclusion and diversity and carry expectations of reciprocity and co-operation between citizens (Bellamy, 2008; Dwyer, 2010; Faulks, 2000). However, as societies become more complex it becomes more difficult to maintain a sense of solidarity (Bellamy, 2008; Faulks, 2000; Yarwood, 2014). One way for nation-states to promote social accord is to implement citizenship education programmes that can shape the development of ‘ideal’ citizen-subjects and prepare young citizens for their role in society. As Marshall notes,

The education of children has a direct bearing on citizenship, and, when the State guarantees that all children shall be educated, it has the requirements and the nature of citizenship definitely in mind. It is trying to stimulate the growth of citizens in the making . . . . The aim of education during childhood is to shape the future adult (T. H. Marshall, 1950, p. 25).

In order to foster citizenship in ways that fulfil the needs of the nation-state, young people are educated about expected ways of being, and encouraged to develop a sense of shared culture and beliefs (Loader, 2007; T. H. Marshall, 1950). Citizenship education, therefore, is broadly designed to fuel a sense of belonging and national pride and reinforce the social contract between citizen and nation-state (Bellamy, 2008).

Historically, fostering citizenship has been recognised as important for increased civic and political engagement (Heater, 2004). However, whilst social and political events in the twentieth century fuelled fears that educational programmes may be used as tools of manipulation and indoctrination, rather than “education for free citizenship” (Heater, 2004, p. 130), compulsory mass education systems provide an easy route to impart messages to large numbers of citizens-in-the-making, even if there are debates over whether citizenship is ‘taught’ or ‘caught’ (Brooks & Holford, 2009; Heater, 2004). Modern states have utilised compulsory education as a tool for disseminating citizenship in an attempt to address perceived youth disengagement from the political process, and boost civic and political participation (Brooks & Holford, 2009; Heater, 2004) even if the results of mass civics education are tenuous. For instance, a systematic review by Manning and Edwards (2014) found that whilst political expression may be increased, there was little evidence that civics education increased political participation. Nonetheless, citizenship education programmes are an attempt by the nation-state “to regulate the conduct of citizens” (de Koning, Jaffe, &

Koster, 2015, p. 122) and guide young people's understanding and practice of citizenship in ways that will best benefit the nation-state and society (Loader, 2007; Mutch, 2013).

Exactly what citizenship education entails, however, varies according to the socio-political and historical context of the nation-state. As societies and notions of citizenship evolve, so too do citizenship education programmes. Education, and citizenship education, is used not only to reinforce community and national ways of being, but also to emphasise that the maintenance of the democratic community is the responsibility of all citizens (Faulks, 2000; Heater, 2004). Educational spaces become sites where the young citizen is moulded, shaped, and tested for their compliance to the 'ideal' as defined by the nation-state and its agents.

Concerns over 'what' and 'how' citizenship is to be taught reflect the "governmentalisation' of citizenship as a learning process" (Delanty, 2003, p. 599). The result, Delanty (2003) argues, is that citizenship education has come to be viewed as a skill or cognitive competence, where a 'becoming' citizen learns the state-sanctioned values and ways of doing citizenship. Citizenship education programmes privilege existing discourses of naming rights, who gets to bestow status, who has control to define acceptable behaviours, and who gets to decide what is taught in education. Graham (2007), notes that "schooling operates as a field of application for the inculcation of social and moral principles" where "relations of power become exercised, (re)informed and strengthened" (p. 203). As a result, young people are positioned as 'becoming' citizens and the nation state reinforces its privilege to define who is included (Graham, 2007). Furthermore, including citizenship education within the curriculum serves to normalise discursive attitudes and values that will benefit the nation-state, such as participation (Yarwood, 2014). Thus, there are power imbalances that privilege the nation-state's construction of the 'ideal' citizen.

While citizenship education encourages an awareness of the national identity and citizenly obligations to the state, it does so within a global political context that influences the promoted values of citizenship, as well as citizen identity (Yarwood, 2014). Citizenship education in New Zealand today must prepare citizens for participation in a transnational, globalised, multicultural, and increasingly digitally-mediated society. It is a society that is still feeling the effects of right-wing economic policies and global economic events, such as the global financial crisis and rising global inequality of the last few decades. The messages

young people receive about what it is to be a citizen in New Zealand are complicated by multiple discourses of citizenship and notions of place and space.

### **3.2.1 The New Zealand context: Constructing New Zealand citizenship**

The context within which citizenship is ‘taught’ and ‘caught’ (Brooks & Holford, 2009; Heater, 2004) shapes the way young people develop a sense of belonging and connectedness to their community, and thus understand their role as citizens. New Zealand’s history of diverse cultural communities and ways of being influences how young New Zealanders perceive themselves as citizens.

As a nation-state, New Zealand is relatively young. Initially a small “colonial outpost” of Britain, New Zealand has struggled to develop its own sense of nationality, culture, and identity (Spoonley et al., 2003, p. 29). The dual heritage experiences of indigenous Māori and colonial settlers have shaped and influenced the emerging national identity of New Zealand. This sense of national identity, and what it means to be a citizen of New Zealand, has shifted over time as national and global social and political circumstances have evolved, challenging and changing ideas of what it is to be a ‘New Zealander’ (Mutch, 2013; Spoonley et al., 2003).

#### *3.2.1.1 Historically*

In pre-colonial times, Māori identity and notions of citizenship were cemented via whakapapa (genealogy), and organised through whānau (family), hapū (sub-tribe), and iwi (tribe) (Mutch, 2005; Taonui, 2012; van Meijl, 1995). Tribal affiliations provided support and a sense of belonging (Mutch, 2005; Taonui, 2012). The process of colonisation in the early 1800s subsequently changed the social structure of Māori society. Despite the collision of the Māori and European cultures following colonisation, connections and belonging are still core aspects of Māori identity and society (Kelli Te Maiharoa, personal communication, November 20, 2014; Taonui, 2012).

When European colonial settlers arrived in New Zealand, they brought with them differing concepts of belonging, rooted in colonial ties to the British Empire and notions of legal citizenship derived from the mother-nation (Spoonley et al., 2003). However, this Eurocentric colonial world view, of a national identity based around the nation-state, has been challenged in recent times. Since the 1960s, indigenous Māori have re-asserted

concepts of ethno-nationalism and ownership (Spoonley et al., 2003). Recognition of the rights of the tangata whenua (indigenous Māori) by the nation-state has led to the New Zealand national identity developing along dual pathways:

debates concerning the Treaty of Waitangi have confirmed that there are two sorts of citizenship. One of these specifies New Zealanders as subjects of a liberal–democratic state with all the rights and protection afforded to individuals. The other is the right, exclusive to Māori, which recognises their membership of iwi (tribes) and hapū (sub-tribes or extended familial groups) and the fact that the Treaty of Waitangi (1840) guaranteed the possession of traditional resources, including land and fisheries, and the protection of their culture (Spoonley et al., 2003, p. 31).

The concept of national identity has been further complicated by the economic and cultural diaspora of Pasifika peoples. For many Pasifika New Zealanders, community networks stretch across geo-borders between New Zealand and Pasifika nation-states, creating a sense of transnationalism and complicating notions of belonging (Spoonley et al., 2003).

### 3.2.1.2 *Currently*

Currently, in New Zealand, the right to claim legal or formal citizenship status is determined under the Citizenship Act (1977)<sup>3</sup>. Formative citizenship, or the legal status of citizenship, is often gained by virtue of birth within the borders of a nation-state, or through descent if the parents were themselves citizens. In recent years, these conditions have been tightened by New Zealand, and many other countries, to prevent these rights being ‘exploited’. For those who cannot claim citizenship through birth-right, the Citizenship Act (1977) outlines alternative requirements that must be met if applicants wish to gain the legal status of ‘New Zealand Citizen’ by grant. These requirements construct the citizen identity through connection to place. For instance, applicants must have already gained the right to be resident within New Zealand, must show that they have lived in New Zealand for a significant proportion of the previous five years, and must indicate a commitment to reside in New Zealand in the future. Applicants must also show sufficient language competency to conduct basic conversations, must prove they are of good character, and should have some

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<sup>3</sup> The Citizenship Act (1977) can be accessed from <http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1977/0061/latest/DLM443684.html>

basic knowledge of what New Zealand citizenship entails (Department of Internal Affairs, 2014a).

As the governmental department officiating citizenship requests, the Department of Internal Affairs (Department of Internal Affairs, 2014c) reinforces understandings of citizenship as a status (Mutch, 2005) in terms of residence rights and recognition of membership of the nation-state. A citizen is described as:

a person who is legally recognised as, and who has the full rights and responsibilities of, being a member of a state or country. Other people may be legally allowed to be in a country but not have full legal rights and responsibilities (for example, tourists, or people on student visas) (Department of Internal Affairs, 2014c).

Despite these definitions, for those choosing to become citizens of New Zealand the obligations of citizenship are outlined only in general terms of responsibility, including obligations to pay tax and “be a responsible New Zealander” (Department of Internal Affairs, 2016), and to defend New Zealand and New Zealand’s interests (Department of Internal Affairs, 2014b). The New Zealand state draws upon traditional civic and legal status models of citizenship, including concepts of the citizen as having legal membership status, the citizen as a political figure subject to the democratic ideal, and understandings of citizenship as public practice and norms (Mutch, 2005, 2013; see Chapter 2). Citizenship rights and privileges are then bestowed in exchange for citizens’ recognition of participatory responsibilities to the state. Expectations of participatory practices are overtly constructed through a judicial, political, and civil rights lens (see Section 1.1). Nonetheless, while outlining what citizenship entails in terms of responsibilities and privileges, these statements still do not explain what it means to *be* a citizen and *do* citizenship day to day.

### **3.2.2 Citizenship education in New Zealand**

As noted previously (see Section 3.1.1), New Zealand’s national identity and the notion of what it means to be a citizen in New Zealand has evolved with political and social changes. At the same time, formal citizenship education in New Zealand has similarly evolved, responding to changing social contexts. The threads of citizenship education are woven historically through New Zealand’s formal education system and the New Zealand Curriculum (Mutch, 2005, 2013).

### 3.2.2.1 *Historical contextual influences*

The 1877 *New Zealand Education Act* instigated a national education system and a curriculum that shaped, and was shaped by, understandings of what it meant to be a citizen of New Zealand (Simon, 2000). In this initial ‘colonial’ phase (Mutch, 2005), education was about social control and morals education, with the aim of providing an educated citizenry capable of electoral participation, the promotion of egalitarianism and a right to education, and increasing the productivity of the workforce (Simon, 2000). Māori education was separate, but oriented to assimilation into European civilisation (Simon, 2000). The curriculum thus reflected the societal norms of the time.

Over time, what has counted as ideal citizenship values has been shaped by global political events and changing social paradigms. Various iterations of the New Zealand Curriculum have reflected changing values and included citizenship attributes deemed necessary by the state to support and contribute to New Zealand’s place in the world (Mutch, 2005, 2013). For instance, global influences, such as the rise of a new dominant neo-liberal political and economic ideology in Western countries (A. Jones, McCulloch, Marshall, Smith, & Smith, 1990) led to the introduction of “outcomes-focused” (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 4) right-wing education policies that purported to promote equity and equality of opportunity for all students (A. Jones et al., 1990). Consequently, the curriculum began to portray citizenship as economic participation and contribution and emphasised the need for students to learn to be part of a productive, skilled, globally competitive workforce (Mutch, 2005).

Within recent education documents, economic and participatory citizenship values continue to be prominent and woven throughout the curriculum. The current (2007) *New Zealand Curriculum* for instance, draws on economic imperatives, as well as participatory practices to describe the ideal citizen habitus (Faulks, 2000; Mutch, 2013). The curriculum vision describes citizens as confident, connected, actively involved, lifelong learners, who can optimise the opportunities offered by knowledge and technologies “to be successful citizens in the twenty-first century” (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 4) and for the benefit of the New Zealand nation-state (Ministry of Education, 2007, n.d.-b). For citizens in New Zealand, education is therefore more than just a right for citizens to claim. Education is constructed as an obligation or duty for citizens who must educate themselves, and others, for the benefit of the nation-state as much as for individual benefit.

### 3.2.2.2 *Educating the 21<sup>st</sup> Century New Zealand citizen*

Citizenship education is most explicit within the Social Sciences strand, specifically within Social Studies which is taught from Year 1 to Year 10 (approximate ages 5-15 years). Social sciences education focusses on providing students with an understanding of diverse societies and communities, cultural diversity, social norms, relationships and identities, historical contexts and social change, and the role of the economy in society. As the *New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2007) states, “the social sciences learning area is about how societies work and how people can participate as critical, active, informed, and responsible citizens” (p. 30). Other areas of the curriculum further integrate citizenship aspects, such as personal responsibility in Health and Physical Education, economic participation as a “discerning consumer” within the Technology strand, and participation as a “critical, informed, and responsible citizen in a society in which science plays a significant role” through the Science strand (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 17). All these aspects are underpinned by an understanding of the citizen habitus as participatory, critical, active, informed, and responsible. There is an emphasis on participating and contributing within the community as a key competency goal and as a value of the New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007; B. E. Wood, Taylor, & Atkins, 2013).

While teachers and principals tend to view civic and citizenship education in New Zealand as a school-wide responsibility, social studies teachers are most likely to have incorporated citizenship activities into their classrooms (Bolstad, 2012). However, if citizenship activities are not regularly part of the wider school environment, young people’s opportunities for transformative social action and moments of citizenship may be restricted due to the limited teaching time for social studies within the school year (B. E. Wood et al., 2013). Furthermore, Bolstad (2012) reports that feedback from principals and teachers indicates “there is no strong and consistent view about either which specific kind(s) of citizenship knowledge and competencies New Zealand students should be developing, or what combinations of knowledge and experiences students might need in order to develop them” (p. 13). Inconsistent approaches within, and between, schools may affect young people’s citizenship engagement.

Young people’s understanding of citizenship attributes and civic knowledge shape how they envisage engaging in social and political practices when older. For instance, the 2008 International Civics and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS) assessed Year 9 students



(ages 13-14 years) from 38 countries about their understanding of civic and citizenship issues, and their identity as a citizen of their nation. In their summary of the New Zealand results, R. Hipkins and Satherley (2012) note that Year 9 New Zealand students had strong public practice concepts of citizenship values such as working hard, obedience to the law, voting, and respect for political process. These values correlated with levels of civic knowledge, with those students who were most knowledgeable also having the strongest views on a good citizen's attributes.

Conversely, low levels of civic knowledge were linked to potentially feeling disenfranchised and an expressed willingness to take part in 'confrontational' or 'illegal' protests involving activities such as occupying public buildings, blocking traffic, or spray-painting protest slogans (R. Hipkins & Satherley, 2012). It is possible that students were reluctant to indicate they might participate in 'confrontational'-type protests because they perceived that these actions would be viewed more negatively. Nonetheless, over a fifth indicated they would undertake 'confrontational' actions as a form of protest and about half indicated they would engage in moderate forms of protest such as writing letters, boycotting products, and engaging in peaceful protests. Furthermore, while many New Zealand students showed interest in social actions such as volunteering and reported they would take part in "representative democratic activities such as voting" when older (R. Hipkins & Satherley, 2012, p. 3), they showed less interest in participating in more traditional and overt political activities, such as membership of political parties.

Similar disaffected attitudes towards traditional political participation were reported in an earlier Australian study (Harris, Wyn, & Younes, 2007). Harris et al. (2007) found that friends and family were the most important social groups helping young people feel emotionally connected and a sense of belonging. These emotional connections provided spaces where young people felt their opinion was valued. Whilst students were comfortable belonging to formal organisations such as sporting clubs, religious groups, or youth groups, few reported belonging to formal political organisations. Youth were not politically disinterested, however. Rather, many of the young people in Harris et al.'s (2007) study felt that their participation in political activities was not wanted and they were frustrated at their lack of voice. Perhaps as a result of feeling disempowered, young people preferred "to be engaged in informal activities that are not structured through organisations or by adults" (Harris et al., 2007, p. 24). Moreover, political engagement tended to be reserved for

informal settings, such as conversations with friends and family. If civic engagement should encompass everyday lived experiences of feeling connected to communities (Beals & Wood, 2012; Harris et al., 2007), then the way young people report feeling marginalised from adult-centric society has implications for their future citizen engagement.

Students' development of citizenship values and knowledge can be influenced by their perceptions and experiences of a democratic school environment and the chances they have to contribute to the school and community (Bolstad, 2012; Harris et al., 2007; Hayward, 2012). With support from schools, students can feel empowered through active participation in the school environment (Harris et al., 2007). However, students may experience inconsistent messages about participating and contributing (Hayward, 2012). Typically, many of the opportunities for students to participate within the school are limited and come from sporting or cultural activities, although for a few students there is a chance to participate in representative democracy as student representatives on Boards of Trustees, or school councils. Even when given a chance to express an opinion, however, students may feel their voice is dismissed and their opinions disregarded (Bolstad, 2012; Hayward, 2012). Although the curriculum emphasises active and participatory citizenship, students may not feel that they experience this within the school (Bolstad, 2012; Hayward, 2012).

Furthermore, citizenship education may be another example of the role schools play in reproducing social inequality (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). Disparities in civic and citizenship knowledge reflect existing social inequalities, with Māori and Pasifika students scoring lower on civic knowledge in ICCS testing than European or Asian students (Bolstad, 2012). Given ICCS findings that 13-14-year-old students with low civic knowledge may already be feeling disenfranchised, disparities in civic knowledge are concerning for future citizen engagement practices.

Despite student perceptions of non-participation and contribution within schools, Mutch (2013) argues that schools do provide citizenship education in a way that “sets students up for life-long learning and active participation” (p. 63). She, like others (Carlton, 2015; Hayward, 2012, 2013) point to responses to crisis events, such as the Canterbury

Earthquakes<sup>4</sup>, as evidence that young people in New Zealand are socially responsible, community-focussed, and prepared to actively participate.

On the other hand, schools are not the only source of citizenship education. Both formal and informal educational experiences shape the way young people understand their everyday lived citizenship (Bolstad, 2012; Hayward, 2012; B. E. Wood, 2010, 2012, 2014). As Heater (2004) states,

Schools are not operating in a vacuum. If messages of apathy, cynicism and alienation are sent to young people from other influences such as parents, peers, pop-culture and the mass-media, then the schools have the enormous extra job of overcoming these negative signals before any positive teaching can have a chance of taking effect (p. 139).

The way citizenship is discursively constructed within, and beyond, the school gate plays a role in educating young New Zealanders about their roles as citizens (Lawy & Biesta, 2006; Selwyn, 2007). As citizenship practices have become increasingly digitally-mediated (Selwyn, 2007), citizenship education programmes have evolved to address digitally-mediated practices.

### **3.2.3 Educating for digital citizenship**

If citizenship education is about learning how to participate and interact within society for the common good, then digital citizenship education is about learning to do so in an increasingly digitally-mediated world. Traditional citizenship programmes seek to educate ‘becoming’ citizens about socially appropriate behaviours, attitudes, and participatory practices. The new spaces of engagement offered by technology enable new ways of doing citizenship and developing citizen identities that are not necessarily addressed by traditional citizenship education programmes. Digitally-mediated spaces offer the potential for an ‘unbounded’ form of citizenship based upon communities of interest rather than the bounded

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<sup>4</sup> On September 4, 2010, Christchurch, a city in Canterbury, New Zealand was struck with a 7.1 magnitude earthquake causing extensive liquefaction and damage. A group of University of Canterbury students responded by creating the Student Volunteer Army (SVA) to assist residents with clearing the damage and cleared over 65, 000 tonnes of liquefaction. The SVA has since rallied volunteers following further earthquakes, including the more deadly and damaging February 22, 2011 earthquake in Christchurch, and the Kaikoura Earthquakes, and have supported the instigation of similar volunteer programmes internationally (<https://sva.org.nz>).

geographies of the nation-state (Cammaerts & van Audenhove, 2005; Hargittai, 2008; Hargittai & Hinnant, 2008; Mihailidis, 2014; Morozov, 2011). At the same time, digital technology has fuelled communication shifts from language and print texts to increasingly multimodal ‘text’ forms and given rise to the need for citizens to learn multiliteracy skills in order to create meaning within new interrelational spaces (Cazden et al., 1996; Danzak, 2011).

There is a need to consider new ways of teaching citizenship practices that are relevant for young people whose sense of citizenship identity may fundamentally differ to that of the traditional geo-defined citizen of a nation-state (Selwyn, 2007). To participate in digitally-mediated spaces, young people need to learn how to create meaning from digitally-mediated texts and interactions when the informative cues usually provided through face-to-face interactions are similarly mediated (W. Clark et al., 2009). For young people, learning to do citizenship practices in digitally-mediated spaces involves developing the skills, attitudes, and behaviours necessary to access and participate in digitally-mediated communities and spaces. Educating young people as ‘digital’ citizens seeks to encourage the development of ‘appropriate’ digital practices and digital skills.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) skills are increasingly integrated into teaching pedagogy as schools move towards integrating digital devices into learning spaces (N. Davis, 2011; Parkes, Zaka, & Davis, 2011; Selwyn, 2007; Voogt, Knezek, Christensen, & Lai, 2018). Digital technologies have become woven through curriculum subjects, including citizenship education (Selwyn, 2007). Using digital technologies to deliver existing citizenship education programmes offers teachers the chance to access, develop, and deliver citizenship-related resources, such as web-videos, in ways that may be more relevant for young people (Selwyn, 2007). However, ‘digital citizenship’ is just one consideration in the introduction of ICT. For instance, Starkey, Sylvester, and Johnstone (2017) found that school boards in New Zealand often focussed upon increasing teachers’ digital competencies through professional development, to ensure integration of technology into teaching practice. On the other hand, most were less concerned with increasing student capabilities, perhaps accepting assumptions of young people as digital natives (Martinez & Prensky, 2011; Prensky, 2001, 2010; Selwyn, 2009a).

Using digital technologies to teach citizenship education may result in digitally-mediated, or technologically-mediated, citizenship education, but does not necessarily

develop the competence and skills in using the technologies that the New Zealand Ministry of Education portrays as important for future citizens in the New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007). Whilst providing digital capital, skills development does not necessarily shape a digital habitus. Programmes with the aim of educating young people as citizens for a digitally-mediated society need to address not only the skills needed to access digitally-mediated spaces, but also behaviours and attitudes towards others in digitally-mediated spaces (boyd, 2014; Ohler, 2010, 2011; Ribble, 2011; Ribble & Miller, 2013). Educating for digital citizenship involves teaching young people about both being and doing digital citizenship.

A host of educator-oriented websites, organisations, and blog posts have arisen alongside Ribble's (2017) own website to offer resources for teachers wanting to introduce digital citizenship to students (for example, Common Sense Media, n.d.; Costello, n.d.; Digital Technologies Hub, n.d.; Edutopia, n.d.; eSafety Commissioner, n.d.; Global Digital Citizen Foundation, n.d.; Google for Education, n.d.; Heick, 2013; International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE), 2019; Media Literacy Now, 2018; Solution Tree, 2019; The Digital Citizenship Institute, n.d.). These resources have been drawn upon in New Zealand, and promoted to teachers, by organisations such as the New Zealand Post Primary Teachers' Association (New Zealand Post Primary Teachers' Association (PPTA) ICT Advisory Committee, n.d.). However, these resource sites tend to be based in the United States (Common Sense Media, n.d.; Edutopia, n.d.; Heick, 2013; Media Literacy Now, 2018; The Digital Citizenship Institute, n.d.), or claim to be 'global' whilst based out of the United States (Global Digital Citizen Foundation, n.d.; Google for Education, n.d.; International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE), 2019; Solution Tree, 2019), or are based in Australia (Costello, n.d.; Digital Technologies Hub, n.d.; eSafety Commissioner, n.d.). All rely on adult-centric conceptions of "appropriate" ways of being and doing in digitally-mediated spaces and discursive constructions of young people as at risk and needing protection.

In New Zealand, the Ministry of Education (2014) outlined learning with digital technologies as a desired outcome underpinning Professional Learning Development for New Zealand teachers, and student achievement outcomes. This was followed in 2017 by the revision of the Technology learning area of the New Zealand Curriculum and the development of a new focus on Digital Technologies as a curriculum area (Te Kete Ipurangi,

n.d.-c). The goal of the Digital Technologies Curriculum is “to ensure that all learners have the opportunity to become digitally capable individuals. . . . building their skills so they can be innovative creators of digital solutions, moving beyond solely being users and consumers of digital technologies” including “considering their role and responsibility as digital citizens” (Te Kete Ipurangi, n.d.-c). The goal is to ensure that all learners develop digital capital, in terms of skills, in order to be productive and creative digital citizens online.

Netsafe was given the responsibility for defining what is meant by ‘digital citizen’, and by implication digital citizenship, in New Zealand. Netsafe is an independent, non-profit organisation promoting acceptable use of online technologies. Netsafe’s outline of what constitutes a New Zealand digital citizen (Netsafe, 2012, 2015, September 16, n.d.-b, n.d.-c) appears similar to that put forth by Ribble (2011; Ribble & Miller, 2013). Like Ribble, Netsafe offers nine elements of digital citizenship (Table 3-2). However, Netsafe have shaped these elements to the New Zealand context by using the values and competencies of the New Zealand curriculum to develop a model that focusses on the skills, attitudes and behaviours deemed necessary to be a New Zealand digital citizen.

Netsafe’s definition of what it means to be a digital citizen falls into categories similar to those proposed by Ribble (2011) and reminiscent of the way a digital citizen is conceptualised by Mossberger, Tolbert, et al. (2008b). Namely, a digital citizen is expected to understand and be able to ‘effectively’ manage technology use in order to “fully participate in a digital society” (Netsafe, 2012, p. 2). Digital citizens are expected to be literate, confident, and capable of using digital technologies to participate actively in society in a way that benefits them and their society. In other words, digital citizens are expected to possess digital capitals in terms of skills, and a digital habitus that motivates the use of technologies in ways that reflect a collective societal way of being. Furthermore, these definitions of digital citizenship draw upon the established understanding of citizenship as involving both rights and responsibilities. Digital citizenship, in these models, appears to transfer traditional understandings of citizenship to online spaces. In doing so, it is likely the same issues of social inequality that affect traditional notions of citizenship and participation are transferred online (Mossberger, Tolbert, McNeal, et al., 2008). Nonetheless, the definition by Netsafe acknowledges that being a digital citizen is about more than having access to digital technology and the internet. It is about learning to do citizenship practices in a digitally-mediated context.

**Table 3-2** *Netsafe Definition of the New Zealand Digital Citizen*

<b>The successful digital citizen in New Zealand:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is a confident and capable user of ICT</li> <li>• uses technologies to participate in educational, cultural, and economic activities</li> <li>• uses and develops critical thinking skills in cyberspace</li> <li>• is literate in the language, symbols, and texts of digital technologies</li> <li>• is aware of ICT challenges and can manage them effectively</li> <li>• uses ICT to relate to others in positive, meaningful ways</li> <li>• demonstrates honesty and integrity and ethical behaviour in their use of ICT</li> <li>• respects the concepts of privacy and freedom of speech in a digital world</li> <li>• contributes and actively promotes the values of digital citizenship</li> </ul>

Source: Netsafe. (2015, September 16). Digital citizenship and digital literacy. Retrieved from <https://www.netsafe.org.nz/digital-citizenship-and-digital-literacy/>

### 3.3 Young People Doing Everyday (Digital) Citizenship

As technology has become increasingly established in schools and homes, young people have been quick to adopt digital technologies (boyd, 2014; C. Davies & Eynon, 2013). For young people who are often excluded from material public spaces, digitally-mediated spaces offer new interrelational spaces in which to escape parental oversight, explore identity performances, interact socially, and “communicate and engage in meaningful online communities” (boyd, 2014, p. 6; see also, Banaji & Buckingham, 2013; Cassell & Cramer, 2008; C. Davies & Eynon, 2013; Manago, Graham, Greenfield, & Salimkhan, 2008; Selwyn, 2009b; Tufekci & Wilson, 2012; Turkle, 2011). Digitally-mediated spaces offer new spaces of belonging for young people to perform habitus and enhance social capital.

Although young people are performing habitus online, they do so in a discursively constructed context. Digitally-mediated spaces are spaces of “prosumption, the interrelated process of production and consumption” that describes the unpaid production of content by consumers for the financial benefit of corporations (Ritzer, 2013, p. 3). ‘Prosumers’ are engaged in the production and consumption of digitally-mediated content, such as status updates, videos, and blog posts on digital platforms, such as social media, that rely on prosumption to generate revenue (Beer & Burrows, 2010; Ritzer, 2013; Ritzer & Jurgenson, 2010). As young people engage online, consuming content that is corporately produced, such as streamed movies, as well as producing and consuming peer-produced content, such as social media posts, they engage in the “participatory web culture” (Beer & Burrows, 2010,

p. 5) that reinforces the website's habitus or way of being and doing. When young people are prosuming, they are performing individual habitus and reinforcing the habitus of the platform by engaging in the participatory interactions that are expected online, especially in social media (Beer & Burrows, 2010).

Young people's digital habitus and online practices are shaped by their offline ways of being. Robinson et al. (2015) note that "users' behaviour online is an extension of those social roles, interests, and expectations which organize social life in the offline world" (p. 572). Factors affecting offline interactions, such as demographic factors, access, and motivation, are mirrored in online interactions (Albrecht, 2006; Blanch, 2013; Blanch, Nairn, & Sandretto, 2014; Hargittai, 2010; Hargittai et al., 2018; Livingstone et al., 2007; Mossberger, Tolbert, et al., 2008b; Robinson et al., 2015; van Deursen & van Dijk, 2013, 2019). Consequently, social inequalities become digital inequalities, shaping ways of being and doing online (Robinson et al., 2015).

How young people perceive digital spaces shapes their digital practices. Factors such as the perceived audience for interactions and perception of anonymity may influence online behaviours (Suler, 2004; Willard, 2007). For instance, in terms of audience, digitally-mediated interrelational spaces may be multidimensional, existing as concurrent multiple interrelational spaces. Interactions may seemingly be "one to many", "one to one" (Dahlgren, 2005, p. 150), or concurrently both. Many internet users use digitally-mediated spaces to reinforce their own worldview, connecting to others transnationally to find 'those like me' rather than challenging others' views (see also Banaji & Buckingham, 2013; Baumgartner & Morris, 2009; Morozov, 2011), but potentially negative consequences arise if an individual mistakes their audience. An individual may post on social media for an imagined audience of a close friend but forget the potential for a wider audience to view the posting in 'one to many' spaces, with potentially negative consequences (Brooks-Young, 2010; Marwick & boyd, 2011). Similarly, the seeming lack of a visible audience and the false sense of anonymity provided by the screen's material barrier, means people may feel a sense of disinhibition and perceive minimal consequences from their actions, potentially leading to negative online interactions (Ohler, 2010; Suler, 2004; Willard, 2007). The possibility for negative consequences from online interactions fuels disquiet around young people's use of digitally-mediated spaces.



Young people are doing (digital) citizen in a social context where the ways they participate, and the spaces they participate in, are discursively constructed. Discourses of opportunity compete with discourses of risk for dominance in discussions around young people's participation in digitally-mediated spaces. Young people are encouraged to develop digital capital in the form of digital technology skills for future success as competent, skilled citizens (Ministry of Education, 2006, 2007). Yet, discourses of risk have fuelled 'moral panics' from media, parents, and educators over young people's use of technology and the potential for negative consequences (Cassell & Cramer, 2008; W. Clark et al., 2009; Gabriel, 2014; Holmes, 2009; Hope, 2014; Mesch, 2009; Slavtcheva-Petkova, Nash, & Bulger, 2015; Third & Collin, 2016; Valentine & Holloway, 2001). In New Zealand, the World Internet Project New Zealand (WIPNZ) found that whilst people reported negative experiences online, most felt it was only a minor problem, although many did change their online practices as a result (Díaz Andrade et al., 2018). Similarly, Netsafe found that 19% of 14-17-year olds were negatively impacted by a negative experience online (Netsafe, 2018b). Parental fears about children's digitally-mediated interactions are exacerbated when parents feel they possess less digital capital than their children or they perceive that their children have previously been exposed to risk in digitally-mediated spaces (Sorbring, 2012). As noted in Chapter 2, young people may be discursively constructed as vulnerable, naïve, lacking awareness and competence, and in need of adult guidance and protection in 'risky' digitally-mediated spaces (De Souza & Dick, 2008, 2009; Mesch, 2009; Peluchette & Karl, 2008). Such discourses may limit the ways young people participate in digitally-mediated spaces.

For young people, attempts to balance competing discourses of opportunity and risk may lead to further issues. For instance, solutions to address the perceived distraction of social media and issues such as cyberbullying within schools, may involve loss of privacy for individual students, or restrictions on access to digitally-mediated spaces (W. Clark et al., 2009). In New Zealand, media have covered stories of a number of New Zealand schools that have chosen to ban technologies such as cell phones, or are banning particular digital spaces, such as social media websites, and encouraging parents to also do so (see for example, Franks, 2019, June 4; Gattey, 2018, February 8). On a broader scale, the solution to perceived negative behaviours by citizens in digitally-mediated spaces may be increased governmental or corporate surveillance of individual users (Morozov, 2011). Thus, Morozov (2011) argues "cyber-utopians" (p. xii) who focus on the emancipatory and democratising potential of technology are overlooking the ways that nation-states, corporate interests, and

other individuals, such as hackers, may use digitally-mediated spaces for surveillance, control, suppression and manipulation of information and, therefore, of citizen populations. Ironically, technological solutions to technological problems often create more problems that may be overlooked.

Until recently, research around youth participation has tended to focus upon ways young people do not meet adult expectations of participation within communities (Lister, 2007c; B. E. Wood, 2010) and has discounted young people's lived experiences within their community (Percy-Smith, 2015). As noted in the previous chapter, young people's participatory practices are shaped and limited by adultist discourses that draw upon constructions of young people as incompetent (Percy-Smith, 2015), "citizens of the future" (Lister, 2007c, p. 696), or as "citizens in the making" (T. H. Marshall, 1950, p. 25). Young people have been accused of being disengaged and apathetic citizens, especially in terms of political participation (Banaji, 2008; Banaji & Buckingham, 2013; Beals & Wood, 2012; Bessant, 2004; Harris et al., 2007; S. Hart, 2009; Pickard, 2019; Putnam, 1995). However, in recent years a growing body of literature has begun to focus upon young people's everyday lived citizenship (Harris & Roose, 2014; Harris et al., 2007; Lister, 2007a; B. E. Wood, 2010, 2015) and there are calls for young people's lived experiences and practices to be recognised as everyday examples of participatory citizenship within their communities (MacKian, 1995; B. E. Wood, 2010). Similarly, there is a need to recognise the way young people are fluidly transmediating citizenship practices across offline and online spaces, creating new interrelational spaces and challenging power relations (Cornwall, 2002; Pickard, 2019; Tufecki & Wilson, 2012).

Young citizens want to make a difference in their communities (Hayward, Donald, & Okeroa, 2011; Hayward & Jackson, 2011, June 6). In New Zealand, B. E. Wood (2010, 2012) found that, far from being disengaged, young people engage in everyday participatory citizenship practices that reflect the interests of their communities, such as church-related or environmental activities (see also, Hayward, 2012). Wood notes that, for the most part, the everyday examples of citizenship "would have remained below the radar of many research tools used to assess youth participation" (B. E. Wood, 2010, p. 121). Yet young people are enacting moments of citizenship through participatory practices within interrelational spaces (Isin & Wood, 1999).

How participatory practices are understood as enacting citizenship is shaped by multiple factors, including age and socioeconomic status (Humpage, 2008). Research with low socioeconomic status (SES) adult New Zealanders found that practices that reflected lived experiences and strengthened ties to community were considered more indicative of citizenship than were practices for the good of the wider political community (Humpage, 2008). Political participation may be a traditional core concept of citizenship, but low SES adults valued local community-oriented participation over formal democratic or civic participation (Humpage, 2008). While civic participation was recognised as a component of citizenship, being a New Zealand citizen was understood as being a member of a community who enacted participatory practices.

Complicating matters are findings that public expression of citizenship by young people, such as expressing political views, are often not welcomed unless they are performed in ‘acceptable’ ways that reinforce power relations (Beals & Wood, 2012; Harris et al., 2007). For example, youth activists in New Zealand who protested in support of increases in the youth minimum-wage, were portrayed by the media as ‘too young’ and immature to protest, as irresponsible, as playing truant from school rather than engaging in ‘legitimate’ protest action, and as too easily influenced by adult groups, such as unions (Cornwall, 2002). Describing young people’s actions as manipulated or exploited by unions and adults, positions adults as socially empowered while denying youth rights and youth agency (Cornwall, 2002). Young people are positioned as needing to be invited rather than having a right to occupy political spaces (Cornwall, 2002).

Young people are also subject to contradictory discursive messages that seek to shape their participatory actions in public spaces. Beals and Wood (2012) argue that adults “want young people to be active agents”, but simultaneously “want to define and regulate this agency” (p. 210). For instance, media portrayed the young minimum wage activists as also choosing an inappropriate venue (the city central square) to protest (Beals & Wood, 2012). In other words, young people’s use of public spaces was questioned in a way that undermined their citizenship practices. Notably, public spaces are common sites of citizen protest and resistance. By dint of being ‘public’ spaces, city squares imply they are spaces of inclusion and interaction. Nonetheless, media responses to young people protesting in the city square reflect how public spaces are subject to wider discourses about which groups have the right to be included or are excluded (Don, 1995).

In contrast, some practices may be deemed acceptable if they conform to expected ways of doing citizenship. For instance, when a separate youth activist organisation chose to visit political representatives at the New Zealand Parliament, rather than protest in the streets, the media portrayed this action as an acceptable performance of agency. The young people were “rewarded for following traditional process and places of expression and resistance in a democracy” (Beals & Wood, 2012, p. 200). Discursive constructions of young people’s participation reinforce existing power relations with the media positioned as “gatekeepers of power” (Cornwall, 2002, p. v) able to approve appropriate youth citizenship practices or undermine and marginalise alternative forms of youth participation.

Young people are frequently criticised for not engaging and participating in citizenship practices, especially in political aspects of citizenship (Loader, 2007; Pickard, 2019). Much research has focussed upon the ways young people are deemed to be disengaged from politics, which has led to young people being labelled politically apathetic (Banaji, 2008; Banaji & Buckingham, 2013; Beals & Wood, 2012; Bessant, 2004; Harris et al., 2007; S. Hart, 2009; Pickard, 2019; Putnam, 1995). Putnam (1995), for instance, argued that in the latter half of the twentieth century youth engagement in the United States declined as levels of social capital declined, although he has been criticised for failing to acknowledge the lived experiences of young people and the ways young people understand their own actions (Holland, Reynolds, & Weller, 2007; Weller, 2009). At the time, Putnam (1995) offered evidence of declining levels of formal and informal participation in group activities, decreasing levels of social trust, and diminishing levels of altruism as proof of weakening social connectedness.

In a more recent work, however, Sander and Putnam (2010) acknowledge there has been an increase in youth civic and political participation in the United States since 2001. They are dubious about the role the internet and social media has played in increasing youth engagement, noting that increases were observable before the rise of popular social media sites such as Facebook (in 2004) and Twitter (in 2006). It is important to note that political engagement is not confined only to social media, and social media is a broader context than Facebook and Twitter. For instance, boyd and Ellison (2007) explain that social media sites, such as Instant Messenger Chat (available since 1997) and Blogger (Blog software available since 1999) have been enabling people to communicate and discuss issues with a wider audience prior to 2001. Technology has allowed young people to socialise and participate in

new ways that may not always be recognised or accepted as citizenship practices or civic engagement.

Digital technologies allow young people to transmediate their citizenship practices. While ‘offline’ citizenship practices may be recognised as such, ‘online’ practices of citizenship may be overlooked. Similarly, the links between online and offline practices of citizenship may not be considered. One example is the way internet use is positively associated with increased awareness and knowledge of political issues (Mossberger, Tolbert, et al., 2008b). Young people are increasingly utilising the internet to access political information and election news and participate in political discussions, actions which are linked to increasing voter turnout and political participation (Mossberger, Tolbert, et al., 2008b). In New Zealand, Hayward (2012) asserts that using digital technologies, “young citizens are finding their political voice” (Ch. 1, para. 1). Using digital technologies, young people perform their citizen habitus and enact citizenship practices across multiple interrelational spaces.

Communities in digitally-mediated ‘public’ spaces provide interrelational spaces where young citizens are challenging negative constructions of youth participation in political action. In New Zealand, youth activist groups have utilised social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, blogs, MySpace, and other websites, to communicate political discussion and organise protest actions in their material communities (Beals & Wood, 2012; Hayward, 2013). Similarly, in Christchurch, New Zealand, the Student Volunteer Army was formed and organised via Facebook in the wake of the 2010 earthquakes by then university student Sam Johnson. The aim was to “connect residents in need with students who could help” (Hayward, 2013, p. 38). The number of young people who joined to help clean up silt and damage in the city grew from 5000 in 2010, to 24,000 young people in the wake of the February 2011 earthquakes. Several years later, the youth group remains active in the community “now experimenting with a range of social service volunteering projects beyond ‘shovelling silt’” (Hayward, 2013, p. 38). Social media and online communities provide a tool for young people to challenge discourses of youth incompetence and disengagement, to overcome spatial constraints, and to challenge discourses over young people’s use of public spaces (Beals & Wood, 2012).

Online spaces of interaction also offer the ability to “challenge established power structures” (Dahlgren, 2005, p. 151). In the global context, young people have used digital

communications and social media to subvert governmental control and organise and coordinate political protests in material spaces (Allagui & Kuebler, 2011; Dahlgren, 2005; Dahlgren & Olsson, 2007; Howard et al., 2011; Pickard, 2019; Tufekci & Wilson, 2012), such as the recent youth-led protests around climate change (Pickard, 2019), or the ‘Arab Spring’ civil protests by young people protesting social conditions (Allagui & Kuebler, 2011; Tufekci & Wilson, 2012). In recent years, activist groups such as *Anonymous* have specifically used digital technologies to conduct and support political action (E. G. Coleman, 2011, April 06). *Anonymous* is a digitally-based, leaderless, amorphous international group of hackers and internet users. From its early roots of ‘mischief’ acts, it has evolved to become a ‘political gateway’ to a protest movement that supports political engagement in both online and offline spaces of interaction (E. G. Coleman, 2011, April 06). While officials from nation-states and companies who have been targeted paint *Anonymous* as cybercriminals, spokespeople claim that *Anonymous* is about social and political justice and the right to a voice, and that group actions are policed and controlled through peer pressure (E. G. Coleman, 2011, 2011, April 06). Notably, the labelling of actions as socially just or criminal is dependent upon, and makes visible, power relations, that is, the dominant nation-state and companies exercise power to construct actions as criminal. Arguably, the hacktivist actions of *Anonymous* members represent alternative ways of interacting as global citizens and subverting nation-state or corporate control.

Young people are negotiating their relationship as citizens with the nation-state, and they are doing so in online interrelational spaces through multiple “private and public activities” (Loader, 2007, p. 10). As Loader (2007) notes: “instead of mediated popular youth culture being regarded as a domain of political control, it can rather be seen as a more complex environment where autonomy and agency can mobilise political action” (p. 10). Digitally-mediated spaces offer new ways for citizens to become informed about their social and political spaces, as well as new ways to participate in revolutionary social movements (Allagui & Kuebler, 2011; Banaji & Buckingham, 2013; Howard et al., 2011; Morozov, 2011; Pickard, 2019; Ternes, Mittelstadt, & Towers, 2014; Tufekci & Wilson, 2012).

As young people colonise digitally-mediated spaces, they are creating new spaces of citizenship participation and challenging inequitable power relations. Cornwall (2002) notes that when new spaces are created, those spaces may subsequently be “filled by those with alternative visions whose involvement transforms their possibilities, pushing its boundaries,

changing the discourse and taking control” (p. iii). The internet may offer those who struggle to participate politically and otherwise in offline spaces an opportunity to have their voice heard (Allagui & Kuebler, 2011; Dahlgren, 2005; Dahlgren & Olsson, 2007; Stromer-Galley, 2003), but it also provides a space where their voices may be challenged by detractors. Nonetheless, digital technologies and digitally-mediated spaces are shaping citizenship attitudes and practices (Banaji & Buckingham, 2013). Young people in the digital age are using both material and digitally-mediated spaces to negotiate identity and enact citizenship, as consumers, as producers, and as ‘becoming’ citizens, who are also political citizens (Ratto & Boler, 2014).

There is a small but emerging body of literature exploring young people’s perspectives and practices with regard to digital citizenship (see for example, Albury, 2016; Couldry, et al., 2014; Johns & Rattani, 2016; Quodling, 2016; Siapera, 2016; Third & Collin, 2016; Vivienne, 2016; Vivienne, Robards and Lincoln, 2016). However, although this growing body of work contributes to theorisations of digital citizenship, there are differences in the ways authors conceptualise digital citizenship and use the concept to frame their analysis of young people’s digitally-mediated practices. For instance, Third and Collin (2016) analyse the ways young people contest adult normative constructions of citizenship through their everyday practices, yet the focus is primarily upon ‘cybersafety’ practices which both challenges and reinforces discourses of risk. Meanwhile, Vivienne, Robards, and Lincoln (2016) and Albury (2016) take a youth perspective in their exploration of how young people use digital spaces as spaces of self-representation and mediated communication and later analyse these digital practices as acts and affirmations of digital citizenship. Other authors (such as Siapera, 2016; Quodling, 2016; Vivienne, 2016) explore the role of digital technologies in opening spaces for acts of digital citizenship, political disruption, and rights claims, as well as spaces of creation and individual expression that may challenge social norms (Johns & Rattani, 2016), or further build upon theoretical constructions of digital citizenship to offer new ways of understanding young people’s digital practices (see for example, Atif & Chou, 2018; BurrIDGE, 2010; Choi, 2016; Choi et al., 2017; Couldry et al., 2014; de Moraes & de Andrade, 2015; Gibbs, 2010; Goggin, 2016; Harris & Johns, 2020; Isin & Ruppert, 2015; Isman & Gungoren, 2013; McCosker, 2015; Mossberger, Tolbert, et al., 2008b; Vivienne et al., 2016). Notably, however, while researchers apply concepts of digital citizenship as a way to understand young people as digital citizens, they often fail to directly involve young people in the discussion and analysis of how digital citizenship might

be understood and whether young people feel their practices align with researcher conceptualisations. This thesis builds upon and extends the emerging literature on digital citizenship by drawing upon direct engagement with young people to explore their understanding of themselves as digital citizens, and to explore their experiences and their perspectives on digital citizenship.

### **3.4 Summary**

Digital spaces have become important spaces of citizenship practice, even if those practices are not always considered in terms of citizenship. Young people are growing up with digital technologies increasingly prevalent within schools and homes, and with growing online provision of services via digitally-accessed e-government (Dahlgren, 2005). As a result, young people are increasingly negotiating digitally-mediated spaces as they enact citizenship practices, engaging and participating in digitally-mediated communities that cross geo-boundaries.

Digital citizenship means “many things to many people” (Vivienne, et al., 2016, p. 15). Digital citizenship may be defined as possession of capitals in terms of ability to access and participate in digitally-mediated spaces, or as habitus that drives behaviours and attitudes towards technology and contributes to a sense of belonging and community. It may further be constructed as normative ‘appropriate’ practices that reinforce the collective habitus around (digital) citizenship. Nonetheless, digital citizenship is understood as a way of being and doing participatory citizen(ship) across transmediated spaces. As such, nation-states have begun to governmentalise digital citizenship education in order to normalise the desired discourses of citizenship, such as appropriate participatory behaviours, to support a sense of ‘community belongingness’ (Delanty, 2003; Graham, 2007; Yarwood, 2014).

Educating for digital citizenship in New Zealand is shaped by New Zealand’s historical context and draws upon discourses of participation as well as digital context-specific discourses of opportunity and risk. Within this discursive context, young people in New Zealand are engaging as participatory citizens, both offline and online, through everyday moments of lived citizenship (Beals & Wood, 2012; Cornwall, 2002; Hayward, 2012, 2013; MacKian, 1995; B. E. Wood, 2010, 2012, 2013, 2015; B. E. Wood et al., 2013; P. Wood, 2013), although their citizenship practices may not always be accepted (Beals & Wood, 2012; Bolstad, 2012; Harris et al., 2007; Hayward, 2012). Consequently, prescriptive



and normative definitions of participatory digital citizenship proffered by educators do not necessarily align with young people's lived experiences of participation in material and digitally-mediated spaces.

In the following chapter, I outline how my theoretical approach (Chapter 2) and the literature basis for this research combine to inform the methodological approach I utilised in this study

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## Chapter 4: Methodology: ‘Getting In’ and ‘Getting Along’

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My approach to this research was framed by a desire to understand how young people understood and made-meaning of the concept of digital citizenship. As Kvale (1996) states, “if you want to know how people understand their world and their life, why not talk with them?” (p. 1). Talking to young people using a qualitative interview approach meant that young people’s voices and opinions were forefront in this research. I wanted to make explicit young people’s meaning-making as experts on their own lived experiences and encourage these young people to participate in the co-construction of knowledge in the research process.

This chapter is organised into five sections. Firstly, I outline the ontological, epistemological, and methodological underpinnings that frame my research design (Section 4.1). In Section 4.2, I present the data collection methods I utilised, involving focus groups and semi-structured interviews that supported young people in describing their lived experiences. In Section 4.3, I discuss the ethical considerations of this research project, including the procedural ethics of ‘getting in’ to the field to collect data (Lofland & Lofland, 1995) and negotiating gatekeepers to gain access. I follow this by reflecting upon the process of ‘getting along’ in the field (Lofland & Lofland, 1995) and the “ethically important moments” (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004) that arose during the research. In Section 4.4, I explain my approach to data analysis, which draws upon a poststructuralist concept of discourses to make meaning of young people’s experiences. I detail how a qualitative interview approach, along with a constructivist underpinning and a discourse analysis approach, allowed my data analysis to take into account how meaning is co-constructed and shaped by context. Finally, in Section 4.5, I summarise the methodology utilised in this research.

### 4.1 Framing the Research Design

Research design is underpinned by assumptions about reality (ontology) and knowledge (epistemology) (Avramidis & Smith, 1999; Creswell, 2007; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Crotty, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Luttrell, 2010b; C. Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Neuman, 2006; Ritchie & Lewis, 2003; Snape & Spencer, 2003; Willis, 2007). I base this research within a constructivist-interpretivist paradigm (see for example,

Avramidis & Smith, 1999; Greene, 2010; Schwandt, 1998) and take a qualitative approach to explore young people’s views on digital citizenship (see Figure 4-1).



**Figure 4-1** Philosophical Underpinnings of the Research

A constructivist-interpretivist underpinning represents ‘reality’ as multiple and subjective according to human experience (see for example, Avramidis & Smith, 1999; Crotty, 1998; Greene, 2010; Schwandt, 1998). Constructivism and interpretivism are often entangled as they share the goal of understanding the world through individual experiences and meaning-making (Avramidis & Smith, 1999; Greene, 2010; Schwandt, 1998). Constructivism is about knowledge and truth as “created, not discovered . . . the product of complicated discursive practices” (Creswell, 2007, p. 236). As such, knowledge, concepts, and ideas are constructed as people make sense of lived experiences within a context produced by discourses (Creswell, 2007; Crotty, 1998). As individuals ascribe meaning to experience, shared meanings shape social reality and create a cultural “world of meaning” (Crotty, 1998, p. 54) through a process of social construction (see also Chapter 2). In terms of this study, how young people understand digital citizenship is shaped by social, political, and historical constructions of the concept of citizenship, of the concept of young people, and of digitally-mediated spaces. Furthermore, because constructivism acknowledges that all knowledge is shaped by experiences and perceptions, it is important that I acknowledge

my positioning as researcher, as I have done in Chapter 1, as my values, background, and experiences shape my interpretations in the research context (Creswell, 2007; Schwandt, 1998; Willig, 2017).

Interpretivism focusses upon developing understanding of the human experience within a particular context (see for example, Greene, 2010; Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006; Schwandt, 1998). Importantly, interpretivists consider social agents as “autonomous, intentional, active, goal-directed; they construe, construct, and interpret their own behaviour and that of their fellow agents” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 225), a view that aligns with current understandings of young people as holders of human rights (UNCRC, 1989, 20 November). Gaining understanding of individual experiences is about listening to people’s descriptions and explanations; in Kvale’s (1996) words, to “talk with them” (p. 1). Nonetheless, as with constructivism, it is necessary to acknowledge the researcher’s role in the process of interpretation and meaning-making (Grant & Giddings, 2002). Indeed, Bryman (2012) notes that an interpretivist stance results in multiple interpretations occurring throughout the research process. In this research, I have interpreted the data through the multiple theoretical tools used (see Chapter 2) and participants have interpreted their lived experiences which are re-presented in the data. The results of these multiple interpretations are represented in the findings chapters and I take a reflexive approach throughout. To gain rich insights into how young people understand the concept of digital citizenship, it was necessary to explore individual lived experiences and meaning-making of digital citizenship, which drove my choice of a qualitative approach to the research design.

In this study, qualitative interviews provided opportunities for richer, more in-depth responses that allowed glimpses into the discursive contexts young people were drawing upon when constructing and embodying ways of being and doing digital citizenship. Qualitative research is a diffuse practice that gives rise to multiple methods of enquiry (Babbie, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Flick, 2007; Given, 2008; Luttrell, 2010a; Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). A qualitative approach is interactive, interpretive, and naturalistic (Flick, 2007) and carries ethical implications in terms of the interpretation and representation of participants’ lives (Rogers & Willig, 2017). To ensure that participants’ perspectives are forefront, the positioning of the researcher and the methods used to gather data must be clear, and the research design must be explicit on how the research components support the inquiry framework (Luttrell, 2010a).

Accordingly, as I have outlined, my research is located within a constructivist-interpretivist paradigm with a qualitative approach and draws upon four theoretical lenses for the analysis: poststructuralist concepts of discourses (Foucault, 1972, 2002), Bourdieusian analysis of habitus and capital (Bourdieu, 1977; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), interrelational notions of place and space (Massey, 2005), and understandings of digital citizenship as digitally-mediated citizenship (see Chapter 2). I have acknowledged some of the tensions between these multiple theoretical strands in Chapter 2, as well as ways they complement each other. Willig (2017) notes there has been a move in qualitative research towards employing complementary analytical approaches to gain deeper understanding of data. Taking a multiple-focus theoretical model as a methodology for analysis allowed me to examine the data “through more than one lens during the course of data analysis” (Willig, 2017, p. 17) and provide richer insights into how young people make-meaning of their digital citizenship in a socially-constructed, discursive, and interrelational context.

The combination of a constructivist-interpretivist paradigm with qualitative methodology has shaped the research process, from the design of the research questions through to how I viewed my participants’ (co)construction of (digital) citizenship within interrelational research spaces. It has shaped the ongoing reflexive moments where I consider(ed) my role as researcher and the way my values and attitudes have influenced the research and contributed to the meaning-making process. But it has also shaped the way I have grappled with, and responded to, the ethical moments that arose during the research process.

## **4.2 Research Design**

When designing the research methods, I was aware I was asking participants to examine their (digital) citizenship and belonging, aspects of their lives that they perhaps took for granted. I needed to make the “familiar strange” (C. Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 141), not only for myself as researcher, but also for the participants if I was to understand their meaning-making and the way they constructed their understanding of citizenship and digital citizenship. I decided to adopt two phases of interviews to gather data aimed at encouraging young people to reflect upon their own ‘everyday’ lived experiences. All interviews were conducted between October, 2014 and June, 2015.

The first phase of interviews was conducted via focus groups in order to explore the concepts of (digital) citizenship with the participants. Focus groups are a common tool for discovering collective meaning and norms (Bloor, Frankland, Thomas, & Robson, 2001; H. Davies, 2015; Gibson, 2007; Klieber, 2004), as they allow participants “collectively to tease out previously taken for granted assumptions” (Bloor et al., 2001, p. 6). However, focus groups may leave participants mired in an ambiguity of meaning (Bloor et al., 2001) as the group co-constructs concepts. Moderators therefore operate to facilitate discussion and encourage collective consideration of topics (O.Nyumba, Wilson, Derrick, & Mukherjee, 2018). My purpose, as facilitator and moderator, was to encourage participants to start thinking about the norms and interpretations of ways of being and doing (digital) citizenship, and how these might apply to their lived experiences. My hope was that the collective discussion would help stimulate participants to consider and clarify their own thoughts and perceptions around (digital) citizenship.

The second phase of interviews were follow-up individual interviews with participants. Combining group and individual interviews provides benefits for both participants and interviewer (S. Punch, 2002). The participants in group interviews gain support and confidence with their peers present (C. Marshall & Rossman, 2011), while also becoming accustomed to the interviewer, which may benefit interactions in the individual interview. However, group interactions may result in some participants being overshadowed by vocal peers (C. Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Thus, the individual interview provides an opportunity for the participant to voice experiences and opinions that they may not have felt comfortable revealing in front of peers (Kvale, 1996; C. Marshall & Rossman, 2011; S. Punch, 2002).

My choice to use focus groups served additional purposes. Focus groups were a methodological tool that allowed me to introduce myself and my research to participants and begin to build rapport. I was conscious that repeated contacts between myself and participants, as we organised meeting and then met in person, could be read as my ‘doing rapport’ (Duncombe & Jessop, 2002). I acknowledge that engaging through focus groups before meeting individually allowed myself and the participant to become familiar with each other, which I hoped would help participants to feel comfortable in the subsequent individual interviews. Furthermore, the conversations and line of questioning in individual interviews were informed by the themes and issues that arose in the focus groups. The focus groups

created opportunities for participants to explore concepts in ways I may not have considered and allowed participants to position their understandings of citizenship and digital citizenship against their peers' understanding. Later in the process, my awareness of the collective meanings generated in the group meetings informed my analysis of individuals' meaning-making.

In this research I used audio-recorders, with the participants' permission, to record the focus groups and individual interviews. Audio-recorders allow the researcher to focus on the participant and actively engage in conversation without interrupting the conversational rapport by taking notes, but they are not without issue. Audio-recorders cannot capture the embodied nuances of conversation that emerge through the gestures and body language that accompany tonal inflections (Denscombe, 1999). Instead, they provide a mediated, but limited, replication of what was said. Thus, part of my process after each interview was to make field notes (Denscombe, 1999), writing down my observations of any embodied cues from meaningful moments, such as shrugs, that might help my meaning-making during the analysis process.

Throughout, I kept in mind the research questions driving this research process (shown in Table 4-1.), namely, how meaningful the concept of digital citizenship was for young people.

**Table 4-1** *Revisiting the Research Questions*

<b>Core Research Question:</b>	
How meaningful is the concept of 'digital citizenship' to young people?	
<b>Sub-Questions:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How do young people understand 'digital citizenship'?</li> <li>2. How do young people understand 'citizenship'?</li> <li>3. How meaningful is the definition of the New Zealand 'digital citizen' to young people?</li> <li>4. Where do young people feel belonging and/or engaged with communities?</li> <li>5. How do young people feel their digital practices reflect the concept of digital citizenship?</li> </ol>



### 4.2.1 ‘Getting in’: Accessing and recruiting participants

My aim was to incorporate the views of young people who were on the cusp of, or in their early years of formal citizenship responsibilities, such as electoral voting. In New Zealand, young people are eligible to vote from the age of 18 years. Furthermore, as the research incorporated discussion of the definition of digital citizenship that is constructed to be used in formal education, I wanted to ensure the views of senior students in their last years of high school were included. To ensure a diverse range of participants, I decided to recruit from both a lower-decile<sup>5</sup> school and a higher-decile school, as well as to invite young people from a post-school non-education context (a community group), along with young people from a post-school education context (a tertiary group). I therefore set a participant age-range of 16 to 25 years. Four subsets of participants were drawn from four different contexts across several geographic regions. However, I note that whilst I recruited from diverse backgrounds, the participant sample was not representative of New Zealand’s ethnic diversity. Whilst approximately 17% of participants in the individual interviews identified as Māori, no participants identified as Pasifika, only 7% identified as Asian, with the majority identifying as New Zealand European. In the following subsections, I outline how I used several methods to recruit participants, from negotiated access through schools, to snowballing through a contact, and approaching young people in a public space.

#### 4.2.1.1 *Recruiting in schools*

The recruitment process began by identifying a range of lower-decile and higher-decile schools that might provide a diverse range of students. At the time, the New Zealand Ministry of Education ‘*Education Counts*’ website (<https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz>) provided school statistics such as decile and school population details. I selected a range of schools according to decile funding status and the estimated gender and ethnic diversity of senior students (based on the school’s July 2013 data).

As digitally-mediated citizenship is likely to be easier for those with access to economic capital, I wanted to provide opportunities for the voices of students who may have

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<sup>5</sup> Decile ratings are an indication of the relative socio-economic status of the school’s student community compared to other schools and are used to apportion school funding. Lower-decile schools have a higher proportion of students from low socioeconomic communities compared to higher-decile schools (Ministry of Education, n.d.-d)

less access to be represented. Wahl-Jorgenson (2008, p. xi) notes that it can be difficult to access those “excluded from mediated citizenship, and how and why they are left out”. I therefore cross-matched the geographic locales of selected schools against population data from the 2013 Census data from Statistics NZ (Stats NZ Tatauranga Aotearoa, n.d.), to classify the school locales as Rural, Rural Centre, Main Urban Centre, Secondary Urban Centre, or Minor Urban Centre. These classification categories had been used to estimate the proportion of households with telephone and internet access in the *Household Use of Information and Communication Technology Survey 2012* (Bascand, 2013). I gave greater weighting to approaching schools that were located in minor urban, secondary urban, or rural centre townships, as Statistics NZ data suggested these categories of location had the lowest levels of household internet access. However, I note that in 2012, minor urban centres still had an estimated coverage of 64% households with internet access, while secondary urban and rural urban centres were estimated to have 72% and 73% respectively of households with internet access (Bascand, 2013). Notably, internet uptake has increased dramatically since 2012, and by 2017 internet connectivity for rural and urban was reported at over 94% (Díaz Andrade et al., 2018).

Accessing the privately-public spaces of schools (Blanch, 2013) for research means negotiating access. I contacted principals of schools across multiple geographic regions<sup>6</sup> by mailed letter (see Appendix A), introducing myself, providing details about the research, and seeking permission to enter the school to address a senior student assembly and invite participants. I followed up by telephone two weeks after the letter. I acknowledge that this approach reinforced the school’s role as ‘institutional gatekeeper’ (Heath, Charles, Crow, & Wiles, 2007; Valentine, 1999). However, I considered it necessary due to the logistics of my request; I was seeking permission to address students at schools for recruitment purposes. I had also mentioned potentially interviewing students at schools as I felt the school environment might provide a neutral space and potentially alleviate some of the power issues inherent in interview situations (Elwood & Martin, 2000).

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<sup>6</sup> In order to help protect confidentiality of schools and participants, the following section provides indications of weighting, rather than numbers of schools approached and does not identify geographic regions (see Tolich, 2004).

Ultimately, participants were drawn from two secondary schools in main urban centres: one higher-decile school (Waiporoporo College)<sup>7</sup>, and one lower-decile school (Kikorangi College). For both schools, I initially spoke at a senior school gathering to Year 12 and 13 students and distributed flyers (see Appendix B) about the research, along with information sheets and consent forms to those who showed interest.

In Kikorangi College, a future date was set for my return to hold the focus group. On the agreed day, the school made a space and time available for the focus group to take place during lunchtime and the following class, and the senior teacher encouraged me to briefly remind students of my research at a pre-lunch gathering. The teacher had informed the students that food would be provided during the focus group, which may have potentially acted as inducement for the 13 students who chose to participate.

At Waiporoporo College, I spoke at the senior school assembly and collected expressions of interest from 20 students. A time for an initial focus group was negotiated with six people using an online Doodle Poll, but despite text reminders earlier in the day, only half attended. This necessitated a second group of four participants being organised the following week. In this case, only two participants attended. There is a risk that too few participants can result in the focus group eliciting a “parallel interview” (Hennessy & Heary, 2005, p. 241) so I offered participants the option to have a joint interview together, which combined both focus group and interview questions, and they chose this option.

#### *4.2.1.2 Snowballing in the community*

Recruitment of a non-school based group from the general community of a major urban centre was undertaken via a ‘snowball’ approach. I started by asking a young person who was not currently involved in formal education to hand out invitation leaflets (see Appendix C) about the research to people they knew. Subsequently several young people contacted me for more information and ultimately six agreed to participate. One risk from a snowballing approach to recruitment is that participants may know each other, endangering internal confidentiality (Tolich, 2004), and compromising the potential diversity of the participant group (Ritchie, Lewis, & Elam, 2003). Admittedly, diversity as a group was

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<sup>7</sup> All names of schools are pseudonyms.

compromised in that participants were contacted primarily through a common source and many already interacted socially. However, these participants were drawn from a variety of backgrounds, schools, and rural and urban centres, which created points of difference in the way they had been exposed to concepts of digital citizenship. In terms of the larger participant pool, this group of young people provided a counterpoint to those recruited through education settings.

#### *4.2.1.3 Flow population sampling in a tertiary environment*

To recruit participants from a post-school education environment, a form of flow population sampling (Ritchie, Lewis, & Elam, 2003) was utilised. A public space was identified as an opportunity to approach and talk to a population of predominantly tertiary students. To remove any chance of researcher bias, I adopted one position on a thoroughfare and offered every fourth person who walked past a leaflet containing brief details of the project and my contact details (see Appendix B). Discussing research projects in detail can be difficult in public spaces due to the flow of people passing, risks to confidentiality of being identified as participating, and the reasons individuals are originally in that public space potentially increasing time pressures. Therefore, I asked those interested to provide their name, and contact details on a sign-up sheet as an expression of interest (see Appendix B).

Additional snowballing of participants occurred as those who expressed interest later shared the research details with their friends who then contacted me to register interest. One participant contacted me after noticing a flyer I had pinned in a tertiary-oriented community recreation centre. In all, 28 people registered interest. Potential participants were informed that I aimed to contact volunteers in order of registering interest until a maximum of 15 participants had been reached. Using Doodle Poll to suggest and garner interest for times and dates, I organised an initial focus group for up to 10 participants. Only five participants arrived and took part however, and it was necessary to contact a further group of five participants and negotiate a second focus group meeting. In all groups, those who had registered interest, but did not participate, were thanked for their expression of interest in the research project.

### **4.2.2 Phase One: Exploring concepts through focus groups**

Five focus groups were conducted, ranging between 65 minutes (Kikorangi College) and 140 minutes (Community group). Most lasted around 90 minutes. The focus groups

followed a loosely-structured approach based around a list of questions (see Appendix D) and some audio-visual prompts that were used as focal points to provide variety and encourage engagement in the interview process (Gibson, 2007). All focus groups were audio-recorded, with the recordings used to identify themes and shape the line of questioning for the individual interviews.

The focus group questions were designed to elicit collective understandings of digital citizenship. As part of the process, I introduced participants to the definition of digital citizenship that is promoted to schools by the Ministry of Education and Netsafe (Netsafe, 2012, 2015, September 16, n.d.-b, n.d.-c; Te Kete Ipurangi, n.d.-a, n.d.-b). The aim was not to be critical of the definition or invite criticism of the Netsafe organisation. Rather, my goal was to explore young people's honest reactions to the concept of an 'ideal' New Zealand digital citizen that was being promoted to schools and, hopefully, stimulate them to consider their beliefs and practices. I expected that some participants might find it difficult to challenge aspects of a government-sanctioned definition. I was therefore honest about my own reaction that I did not know if I could meet all the criteria, although I did not provide details so as not to potentially bias participants' misgivings.

The audio-visual prompts available consisted of two television /video advertisements accessed via YouTube: the 'Tasti Made at home in New Zealand' advertisement (Tasti, 2013) which was a cartoon featuring 'kiwi' icons, such as "Shrek the sheep, chocolate fish, the Shotover Jet, the pink and white terraces, rugby", a tiki, and bungee jumping; and the 'Orcon and Kim Dotcom – Capping is not cool' advertisement (The Orcon Box, 2013) in which frontman Kim Dotcom parodies poverty issue advertisements to complain about internet data capping and portray fast broadband as a right. These prompts were used to stimulate discussion in the Kikorangi College focus group and the first Tertiary focus group. In the other focus groups, participants were either aware of the advertisements and discussed their impressions from memory, or discussion was robust and did not need a prompt.

Altogether, five focus groups were held in two types of location: institutional settings and private homes. Focus groups for Kikorangi College and Waiporoporo College were conducted at the schools in empty classroom spaces. The focus group for Kikorangi College was conducted during an extended lunchbreak and following lesson time, whereas the focus groups for Waiporoporo College were conducted after classes had finished for the day. It is not possible to find a neutral setting for focus groups. Venues impact upon participant and

researcher behaviours through subtle cues: institutional settings may influence participants to behave in ways associated with that institution, whereas private homes may encourage conversations to morph into socialising, as well as influence the behaviours of the 'hosting' participant (Bloor et al., 2001). In locating the focus groups in the schools, I hoped that spaces familiar to the participants would construct the participants as 'knowledgeable insiders' and potentially address power imbalances (Gibson, 2007).

The idea of familiar spaces similarly influenced the choice of venue for the community and tertiary groups. After negotiation, the Community focus group was conducted at the home of my contact who had started the snowballing recruitment. This had several benefits: my contact's home was a convenient location for participants to access at little economic cost to themselves and was a familiar space for several participants; although I was not overly familiar with the space, my contact's presence assuaged any concerns about researcher safety (Sieber & Tolich, 2013); and my contact became an informal co-facilitator and social mediator, engaging in the discussions and often offering their own prompts.

As noted, there were two focus groups for the Tertiary participants. The first group was conducted in a community recreation centre with which participants were familiar. The second focus group was supposed to be conducted in the same space the following week. However, the location was renegotiated after one participant was injured on the day of the focus group and was finding it difficult to travel. I had been unaware at the time of organising the focus group that the participants of the second focus group knew each other through their studies. I became aware of this fact after participants organised among themselves a space at the injured participant's home and suggested this to me. At this point I had to decide whether I felt comfortable in a participant's home. I was conscious that my decision was influenced by the fact that the second group of participants were all young women and that their home was in a built-up area. This did not stop me, however, from ensuring that I followed certain safety precautions such as informing my partner when I entered and left the premises.

Despite the variation in contexts for focus groups, all were conducted in similar ways. For instance, at each meeting, we took time for introductions and an informal chat over food I provided on a central table. In the New Zealand context, the concept of *manaakitanga* incorporates the sharing of *kai*, or food, as a gesture of hospitality, caring, and respect for guests (Hudson, Milne, Reynolds, Russell, & Smith, 2010; Tipene-Matua,

Phillips, Cram, Parsons, & Taupo, 2009). In a research context, providing food and drink helps set the social context for the interview (Gibson, 2007; Mann, 2016). Providing refreshments was a way to welcome participants to the research space and show my appreciation for the time they were giving to help with my research.

After settling in, each focus group started by revisiting and reaffirming consent and reminding participants of their right to withdraw or not talk on a topic. To continue encouraging the respectful space, participants were asked to take turns and respectfully listen when people spoke before offering their opinions, reminded of the need for confidentiality around what was said in the group, and asked to affirm they were comfortable having the interview recorded. I offered participants the option of turning off the recorder if they wished to say something ‘off the record’ to the group, although no participants used this approach in the focus groups.

In all groups, discussion was lively and at times, robust. Indeed, in two groups, Kikorangi College and the Community group, the issue for me was to facilitate group-oriented discussion as participants became engaged in debating between each other and concurrent discussions erupted. These were the first focus groups I conducted for the research, which may have been a factor. Another factor may have been the size and familiarity of groups. Kikorangi College’s larger group of 13 participants made maintaining a group focus for all participants difficult (Hennessy & Heary, 2005). On the other hand, the Community focus group was smaller in size, but the participants’ familiarity with each other, and with the space, may have encouraged them to converse in a more relaxed and casual manner.

While I attempted to ensure quieter members also had a chance to speak up, I was conscious that I did not want to draw undue attention to anyone who might feel uncomfortable expressing their view, or who was choosing not to offer a comment on that aspect. Silence may indicate that participants feel anxious or unwilling to participate (Poland & Pederson, 1998; Zembylas & Vrasidas, 2007). To provide spaces for quieter participants to speak up, I therefore used non-directed phrases, such as “what does everyone else think?” (Gibson, 2007; Hennessy & Heary, 2005; Klieber, 2004). I noted that, especially in groups where some participants knew each other, attempts were made to include quieter participants. Often participants began conversations with each other, rather than with me,

with the result that I became observer to the negotiations of meaning-making that happened within the collective.

### **4.2.3 Phase Two: Exploring individual meaning-making**

The second phase of interviews consisted of semi-structured individual interviews with 28 participants who had been members of the focus groups. With the participants' permission, all interviews were audio-recorded for later transcription. Participants were offered the opportunity to check and correct their transcripts and no changes were requested. Interviews lasted between 40 and 90 minutes.

The individual interview questions were open-ended and designed to encourage participants to reflect upon their experiences and understandings of (digital) citizenship (see Appendix D). Qualitative interviews allow the researcher to explore the participant's experiences and opinions about their lived context (Galletta & Cross, 2013; Kvale, 1996; C. Marshall & Rossman, 2011). The interviewer's role therefore is to help participants reflect upon their experiences and make meaning within their context (Galletta & Cross, 2013). Initially, interviews were arranged to follow a similar order of topics as the focus group, which I felt provided a logical flow from understandings of 'citizenship' to understandings of 'digital citizenship'. However, semi-structured interviews are fluid and are shaped by the way participants develop responses that are meaningful to them (K. Davis, 2012; Kvale, 1996). As a result, not all interviews followed the same order, although all covered the main points at some stage.

During interviews, both interviewer and participant co-produce the conversation through their negotiation of the conversational text (Kvale, 1996). Researchers can help participants unpack meaning by providing conversational prompts, clarifying details, inviting elaboration, and paraphrasing (Galletta & Cross, 2013; Kvale, 1996), however, whilst the participant ostensibly leads the conversation, there is a power differential in that the researcher defines the topics and decides which topics are explored further. During the interviews I utilised strategies such as prompts and seeking clarifications or elaboration. Nonetheless, as I identified themes through the analysis process, I inevitably feel there were missed opportunities to follow emerging themes

Like the focus groups, the timing and context for the individual interviews were negotiated with participants. Interview contexts consisted of school premises (two Kikorangi



College and all Waiporoporo College participants), a semi-public community space (four Kikorangi College participants), a private residence following the focus groups (four Community group participants), a community recreation centre (five Tertiary group participants), and cafes (one Community group participant, five Tertiary group participants).

Table 4-2 provides a summary of the methods used to recruit the resultant participant pool and generate the interview data. Pseudonyms have been used for all focus groups and individual participants throughout this thesis.

**Table 4-2** *The Data Collection Process*

Groups	Recruitment	Focus Group (FG)	Individual Interviews and Participants (listed alphabetically)
Kikorangi College (Lower decile)	Presentation at senior student assembly	FG = 1 n = 13 Age range: 16-18 years Ethnicity: NZ European = 5 NZ European/Māori = 1 Māori = 5 Cook Island/Māori = 1 Chinese = 1	n = 6 School premises; Semi-public community space Ethnicity: NZ European = 2 NZ European/Māori = 1 Māori = 1 Cook Island/Māori = 1 Chinese = 1 Charon Cheekie Hadley Lily Molly Reggie
Waiporoporo College (Higher decile)	Presentation at senior student assembly	FG = 2 n = 5 Age range: 16-17 years Ethnicity: NZ European = 5	n = 6 School premises Ethnicity: Addison Betty Darrel Dave Zach Ziva
Community Context	Snowball approach through one contact.	FG = 1 n = 6 Age range: 20-21 years Ethnicity: NZ European = 4 NZ European/Māori = 1 NZ European/Indian = 1	n = 6 Private residence; Café Ethnicity: Adriano Emily Jacinta Jill Nikolai Steve NZ European = 4 NZ European/Māori = 1 NZ European/Indian = 1
Tertiary Context	Flow population sampling and snowballing - every fourth person in a tertiary-dominated public space.	FG = 2 n = 10 Age range: 20-24 years Ethnicity: NZ European = 7 NZ European/Māori = 1 NZ European/Canadian = 1 Chinese = 1	n = 10 Community centre; Café Ethnicity: Alen Antonio Cloe Hayes Jodie Kate Rachel Roseanna Tomas Zoey Community centre; Café NZ European = 7 NZ European/Māori = 1 NZ European/Canadian = 1 Chinese = 1

**Participants**  
n = 28

### 4.3 Ethical Considerations of ‘Getting In’ and ‘Getting Along’

All research has ethical considerations. In New Zealand, as in most countries, all institutional research involving human participants must seek formal ethical review from a Research Ethics Committee (REC). Yet, the formal review, or *procedural ethics* (Guillemin and Gillam, 2004), primarily considers ethics at only one point in time, at the beginning of the project when researchers are trying to ‘get in’ to the field (Lofland & Lofland, 1995). For the researcher, especially the novice researcher, it can be difficult to foresee all the ethical issues that may arise during the research process. Guillemin and Gillam (2004) argue therefore that ethical research requires consideration of a second component, *ethics in practice*. Focussing on ethics in practice requires the researcher to adopt a reflexive approach and remain self-aware of how their decisions, actions, and analysis affects the research process as they try to ‘get along’ in the field.

#### 4.3.1 Procedural ethics: The ethical issues of ‘getting in’

The procedural ethics application gives the researcher the opportunity to show the Research Ethics Committee that they are trustworthy and competent (Guillemin & Gillam, 2018). Procedural ethics requires the researcher to consider core principles of ethical research, such as the potential for harm, the need for informed consent, potential issues of deception, and the protection of privacy, and confidentiality of data (see for example, M. Punch, 1994; Sieber & Tolich, 2013). These factors underpin the formal ethics process overseen by The University of Otago Human Ethics Committee. Because this research involved interviews with young people, a potentially ‘vulnerable’ population, it required a Category A application. This application asks the student researcher and their supervisors to consider aspects such as: the aim, scope, and design of the project; how participants will be chosen /invited and whether participants may be considered vulnerable; what information will be collected and how privacy and confidentiality issues will be handled; whether there is a potential for risk or harm to participants, or researcher, and how that is to be minimised; and how informed and voluntary consent will be ensured.

A unique aspect for the New Zealand ethical process is respect for, and incorporation of the principles of *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* (The Treaty of Waitangi) and the tangata whenua (indigenous people) (Tolich & Smith, 2015). Guided by the principles of partnership, the University of Otago requires local iwi consultation regarding the proposed research from

the Ngāi Tahu Research Consultation Committee. The aim is to ensure that researchers consider “issues of interest to Māori as end users of research” (Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, n.d.). Ideally, researchers should conceptualise the research design whilst taking into account the Te Ara Tika Māori Ethical Research Framework (Hudson et al., 2010) and tikanga Māori principles of “whakapapa (relationships), tika (research design), manaakitanga (cultural and social responsibility), and mana (justice and equity)” (Tolich & Smith, 2015, p. 161). These principles informed my goal to research *with* my participants as we explored how they constructed meaning and understanding. As this research aimed to seek young people’s views on citizenship and belonging, and these views may be of interest to tangata whenua, the Ngāi Tahu Research Consultation Committee requested that ethnicity data be collected and research findings be disseminated to relevant National Māori Education organisations and Toitu te Iwi at Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, which will be done at the completion of this research.

In procedural ethics, young people are often considered a potentially vulnerable population. A researcher must consider aspects such as the young person’s ability to judge the risk to themselves from participating and providing informed consent and then balance these with the researcher’s own beliefs around participant agency. I was guided by concepts outlined by Kipnis (2001) as a way to consider participant vulnerability and potential risk of harm: cognitive capability, subject to authority coercion, deferential masking reticence, medically vulnerable, subject to coercion through allocational disadvantage, and adequate infrastructural resources to participate (see also Sieber & Tolich, 2013). Whilst initially posited in a bioethics field, these concepts intersect with ethical considerations of risk, harm and consent. They encourage the researcher to consider the participant’s lived context when considering vulnerability and were woven throughout the research design and implementation.

Given participants were at least 16 years old, I felt it was likely they were cognitively capable of understanding the research purpose and process and capable of acting as agents on their own behalf in order to give consent. I was guided by the fact that at 16 years old, or younger if adjudged competent, young people are deemed capable under New Zealand law of consenting with regard to their medical treatments (van Rooyen, Water, Rasmussen, & Diesfeld, 2015). Furthermore, the past few decades have seen a growing recognition of young people’s rights, competency, and agency to consent on their own behalf to

participating in research (see for example P. Christensen & Prout, 2002; Heath et al., 2007; Rodríguez & Brown, 2009; Schelbe et al., 2015; Valentine, 1999). However, institutional exemplars may use academic and complex language that is not always accessible for younger participants. I therefore provided the participant information and consent forms (see Appendix E) in plain language to aid clear communication of what I would be asking participants to consent to doing. I also asked my teenage children to read the Participant Information Sheet to check clarity and I modified the language where necessary. To further ensure informed consent, I recapped the details verbally during the research process, reminding participants of their right to withdraw or not answer any questions, and gaining verbal consent at the beginning of the focus groups and individual interviews.

Confirming consent verbally during the research process further served to mitigate potential issues of external coercion to participate. Younger participants in schools may be vulnerable to perceived subtle pressures to participate from authority figures, such as their school principal and teachers who appeared to support the research. In schools, teachers would be present during my 'recruitment speech' to the gathered students. For the young adults who I approached in public spaces, or who were snowballed through other participants, similar coercive pressures from peers may exist. To minimise coercion to participate, participants could either express interest via a sign-up sheet, or contact me directly. They could then choose whether to proceed, or not, when contacted at a later time. Indeed, a number of those who indicated initial interest via the sign-up sheets at schools or in public declined to engage further with the research process. Those participants who continued on to take part in the focus groups and then the individual interviews, further verbally reaffirmed their consent at each stage.

Focus groups and interviews both raise ethical issues. The locations of interview sites may raise issues of power and meaning (Elwood & Martin, 2000). Aware of this, I offered participants a range of suitable spaces to choose from, including at their schools or institutions, and cafés, although two focus groups were eventually conducted at places of residence. Meeting participants at home is not without risk for the researcher and participants (Bahn & Weatherill, 2012). Where residence-based interviews took place, I took steps to ensure that my partner was aware of where I was and how long I was likely to be, as well as carrying my cell phone. To ameliorate risk to participants, I only agreed to residence-based interviews where there would be other people present or nearby. Nonetheless, situations can

change quickly, and these steps do not necessarily mitigate the potential for risk. The majority of meetings took place in public spaces. Students nominated times to meet and I arranged meeting spaces with the school. I then met the student at the school office or at the front of the school so they could lead the way to the interview space. Students were therefore positioned as more knowledgeable in the school environment, and could, if they wished, minimise the chance that school staff could identify them as participating, although this could not be guaranteed.

Due to the focus groups and individual interviews, it was not possible to offer anonymity, as participants were aware of others who were participating. Instead participants were assured that confidentiality would be maximised through the removal and encoding of identification markers in the reporting and publication of data. Nonetheless, focus groups endanger internal confidentiality as they increase the chances that participants could recognise and identify statements from other participants (Tolich, 2004). Participants were verbally reminded of this fact, and the need to maintain confidentiality of what was discussed, at the beginning of the focus groups. During the individual interviews, participants either chose a pseudonym from a list of randomly generated names or provided their own. A few participants initially wanted to use ‘pseudonyms’ that were closely linked to their identity. To protect their privacy and the privacy of others in the research with whom they may be associated, I negotiated with participants to find pseudonyms that may still hold meaning but were less personally identifiable. While some participants chose to be interviewed with friends, only those in the interviews knew the pseudonyms chosen.

As the study asked participants to reflect upon their experiences, perceptions, and views of citizenship and digital citizenship, I felt it was unlikely, but not improbable, that the topics covered would cause harm or discomfort. Nonetheless, I acknowledged the possibility that, in looking at issues of belonging and community, or reflecting upon their digital practices, the participants might disclose information such as being subject to negative or risky interactions and behaviours or accessing inappropriate content ‘online’. I therefore provided all participants with a leaflet listing contact details for support agencies, as well as my university contact details and a research-specific cell phone number if they needed to follow up on any issues raised (see Appendix F). Among the agencies listed were the digital support service, Netsafe, who could provide specific support regarding issues ‘online’, as well as age-appropriate support agencies such as Youthline, and details for

relevant school or institutional support services. I considered that providing details of support services may potentially contribute to a sense that the research and perhaps digitally-mediated spaces were risky spaces where young people may be vulnerable. However, I felt any potential discursive cues from providing support details were outweighed by my duty of care to participants (Miller et al., 2012) and it was important to ensure participants had details of support services in the event they were needed.

Given that I aimed to recruit a diverse socioeconomic range of participants, another concern was the potentially coercive impact of any *koha* (gift or recompense) for participating in the research. The concern is that participants experiencing socioeconomic (allocational) disadvantage may find a seemingly minor *koha* an inducement to participate (Kipnis, 2001; Macklin, 1981). On the other hand, Emanuel (2005) equates research participation to paid work and argues that payment for reasonable risk should not be considered an inducement. Similarly, Dickert and Grady (2008) question why volunteering for monetary rewards is considered less valid than altruistic volunteerism. They argue that recompense should take into account risk and time required. Following feedback from potential participants, and given I was asking participants to contribute time and emotional labour as they shared their thoughts, perceptions, and practices, I increased my initial *koha* from a \$25 voucher to a \$30 retail gift voucher of the participant's choice, which may have increased participation rates. Singer and Ye (2013) found that survey participation rates increase, although at a declining rate, as the remuneration increases, but concluded that monetary *koha* is unlikely to fully compensate the participant for their contribution. I felt that, while I offered the opportunity to have a voice in research, and to describe and reflect upon their lived experiences of (digital) citizenship and digital participation, the *koha* reflected my gratitude for their contribution and took into account the amount of time I was asking participants to contribute.

While formal ethical approval requires researchers to outline how they aim to recruit participants, this does not always address ethical issues that may arise in doing so. Gatekeepers may present unexpected ethical dilemmas for researchers trying to get into research sites and recruit participants (A. Chambers & Beres, 2016; Wanat, 2008). Gatekeepers may deny access to researchers for many reasons, including protecting the participants' and institution's time and reputation (Heath et al., 2007; Wanat, 2008). Frequently, the perceived time commitment for staff and students was a barrier to my

gaining access. One principal verbally disclosed that their school received hundreds of requests for their students to participate in research each year. They therefore felt they had to prioritise research potentially useful to the school community, such as research around specific youth issues, or research by the Ministry of Education. Similar sentiments were echoed by other principals. These principals described the way schools can become over-researched populations of convenience – as a researcher, where else can you easily find many young people in one place? There is a risk that participant groups who are ‘in-demand’ with researchers may experience ‘research fatigue’ and an increased reluctance to engage with further research, especially when participation does not appear to provide direct benefits to them (T. Clark, 2008; Wanat, 2008).

Even when access is granted, intermediate gatekeepers may impede research or give rise to ethical dilemmas (Wanat, 2008). Early in the data collection phase, I visited a school that did not ultimately feature in the research. After approaching the principal of ‘Kōwhai College’, I was given permission to address senior students at the assembly. However, on the agreed day, I arrived at the appointed time to find the principal was away and had forgotten to inform the senior teachers of my visit. My reception by the senior teacher in charge was not welcoming and I had to decide whether to proceed. As accessing this school had required travelling some distance, I opted to continue with the talk to students. However, throughout my presentation, I was aware the senior teacher was standing to one side of me, tapping their foot, with their arms crossed. Although I do not know how students perceived this performance, my impression was that the teacher was impatient, and I felt pressured to rush my presentation even whilst trying to ensure I fulfilled my ethical commitments and provided enough information for students. This is not an unusual situation for researchers. Permission for access is not the same as cooperation and assistance in the field, especially when there are layers of gatekeepers, in this case the principal and senior teachers, whose cooperation is needed (Wanat, 2008). Wanat (2008) notes that gatekeepers “may be uncooperative” (p. 193) to resist their own participation in the research process. Optimally, if there had been time, I could have talked over the research with the senior teacher. In this case, I had no prior relationship with the senior teacher who had been co-opted into what possibly felt like an unexpected task. This perhaps contributed to later events which led to an ethical dilemma on my part, as I shall discuss in the next section.



### 4.3.2 ‘Getting along’: Reflexivity and ethical moments in practice

Lofland and Lofland (1995) note that new problems continually arise in the field as researchers try to get along with gatekeepers, participants, and address the ethical issues that arise. Ethically important moments can happen at all phases of research and require the researcher to make decisions as to how to proceed. A core part of addressing the ‘ethics in practice’, or the unforeseen “ethically important moments” that arise during the research process is adopting a reflexive approach (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004, p. 262). Through this research, there were several ethical moments that had not been anticipated during the procedural ethics process, although these moments are not unique to this study (A. Chambers & Beres, 2016).

#### 4.3.2.1 *The problematic phone calls*

As noted in the previous section, senior teachers at ‘Kōwhai College’ had not been informed of my arrival and appeared resistant to my presence. Intermediate gatekeepers may be openly uncooperative, or resist full cooperation, and subsequently limit the way research proceeds (Wanat, 2008). In this case, the teacher, as intermediate gatekeeper, potentially shaped the way students perceived the research. During my presentation, one student loudly called out that he would be keen to participate. However, after distributing flyers and as we were leaving the hall, I overheard the teacher telling him firmly, “No, you can’t take part; you’re not a good example of the school”. This elicited jeers from his peers who were nearby. I was uncomfortable at the teacher’s statement but felt unable to approach and address the situation without risking embarrassing either the student or the teacher. I found it interesting that the teacher was concerned about impression management with regards to the student’s behaviour but had not considered the way their own behaviour may be interpreted by myself or the students. At the time, I hoped the student would still contact me to take part as I had stressed that participation in the research was confidential. Potentially this influenced the subsequent events.

Whether the teacher’s actions affected interest in the research is unknown. However, it was interesting that I received only one ‘response’ from a large cohort of senior students at Kōwhai College and that response led to an ethical moment. Shortly after leaving the school, I received several phone messages of an ‘unsavoury’ nature from a young man. I faced an ethical dilemma over what to do. Should I inform the school? Kōwhai College was the first school I had shared the research-specific cell phone number with students, so the

call had to come from someone associated with Kōwhai College. In my research journal, I reflected that the young man who left the messages had not agreed to be a participant, the formal consent process had not started, and there was no obligation of confidentiality or protection on my part. I was left feeling a sense of discomfort and disquiet. Israel (2015) notes that procedural ethics and researchers often fail to account for the risk of emotional stress for the researcher. It was some months before I really talked about my emotional response to someone else and unpacked the discomfort I had felt from the phone calls. In terms of addressing the ethical dilemma created, I decided that the research process was under way and that, in the interests of confidentiality and preventing harm to participants, I would take no action regarding the calls. I had to consider that the caller may have been the young man who had been humiliated by the teacher, and if so, I did not want to contribute to making things more difficult for him at school. I note that I subsequently did not proceed with research at Kōwhai College due to the lack of responses.

Researchers have an ethical obligation to protect participants from harm. Yet at times this obligation may appear to contradict needs to respect participant agency and ability to provide informed consent. As the interviews proceeded, I had several moments where I had to decide how to proceed with participants' disclosures.

#### 4.3.2.2 *Problematic disclosures*

One interview caused an ongoing dilemma. During a focus group, one participant had indicated they wanted to talk about the 'hactivist' group *Anonymous* in terms of digital practices. I took some time to consider my response. Notions of informed consent mean that I had to assume an otherwise competent young adult was capable of assessing risk and could make rational decisions as to what information to disclose. However, Alldred and Gillies (2012) have queried whether participants can fully comprehend the future implications of disclosing information. I had to weigh considerations of respecting and protecting my participant alongside protecting myself as a researcher from potential consequences. When it came time to do the individual interview with this participant, I raised this topic before we began, and we discussed potential implications of what may be discussed. I had provided all the participants with copies of the interview questions beforehand, so the participant was aware of the line of questioning. After some discussion, we agreed on a set of strategies that would address our concerns, although I acknowledge that these were primarily my concerns. We decided that, during the interview, the participant would control the recorder; the

participant could depersonalise topics by referring to ‘my friend’ or ‘some people’ when discussing activities; and if necessary, I would redact, or modify, quotes (without changing meaning) for use in publications. The result was that some discussion in this interview occurred ‘off-the-record’, an act which re-configured the interview space and challenges the perceived veracity of the audio-recording as an accurate record (Nordstrom, 2015). In my journal, I noted at the time that the participant’s actions might be considered a citizenship practice: exercising agency to participate and give their time and thoughts for what they perceived to be the social good.

Procedural ethics offers no guidance on what should be written about data (Tolich & Ferguson, 2014). Although the participant and I negotiated strategies, this situation was an ongoing dilemma even after the interview. For instance, I made the decision to selectively transcribe the recording of that section of the interview. I remained conscious that my ‘off-the-record’ knowledge shaped my analysis of the remainder of the participant’s interview. I therefore ended up re-checking my analysis of this participant’s transcript several times to ensure consistency. My decisions on what information, if any, to use and how I would present it, was not decided until I neared completion. I remain reflexive that my actions to minimise risk for my participant (and potentially, myself) may have changed the data that arose from the interview by emphasising some themes, whilst downplaying others.

Similarly, I felt an ethical duty of care (Miller et al., 2012) to remind participants at the beginning of interviews about the way they discussed their digital practices. Although I felt the risk was probably low, I felt an ethical obligation to remind participants that disclosing some activities, such as ‘downloading’ of copyrighted content, might be problematic. I wondered whether this might lead participants to view themselves as ‘bad’ citizens. However, as I noted in my research journal, those who did mention downloading activities perceived the risk of repercussions as low. To ensure that I too was comfortable with disclosures, I made the decision to report the findings regarding ‘potentially risky’ digital practices without attribution to individual participants as a further protection.

Notably, many participants did not mention risky digital practices, even when their conversations ‘off-the-record’ indicated that they may have engaged in some practices. For instance, before a focus group interview began, one participant mentioned seeing a copy of a yet-to-be-released movie that was not available through traditional channels, implying that they had accessed a ‘pirated’ copy. I noticed that some participants shaped their interview

performances in response to my pre-interview speech. Performative acts are shaped through speech (Butler, 2015; Pykett et al., 2010); both the speaker and the act are constituted by what and how the words are said. In attempting to act ethically and encourage participants to consider the ways their responses may be interpreted and used, it is possible that my reminders may have been interpreted by participants as a warning not to mention some aspects in interviews. Such warnings may have led participants to feel they could not mention some digital practices, such as viewing pirated movies, for fear of being judged even though that was not my intent. In seeking to protect participants and act ethically, it is possible therefore, that I shaped my participants' disclosures during the interviews.

#### **4.4 Analysing the Data**

My analysis followed an iterative, inductive approach informed by discourse analysis techniques to explore young people's meaning-making and ways of being and doing (digital) citizenship. Discourse analysis considers how, what, and where language is used, and what social realities are made possible (Dunn & Neumann, 2016). In interviews, participants were being and doing their identity as (digital) citizen, not only through their narrative, but also through the language they used, the emotions they showed, and through embodied and discursive cues, such as shrugs, pauses, tonal intonations, and so on (Cameron, 2001; Gee, 2014; Wetherell, 1999). I was conscious during the analysis that participants were shaping their interview performance to fit perceptions of themselves and to shape my perception of them (Gee, 2014; Goffman, 1959). Given that I had also spoken to participants about the need to be careful of details they revealed, potentially participants were similarly conscious of the way they may be read by others outside the research.

##### **4.4.1 Acknowledging the researcher's role in co-constructing knowledge**

Researchers are not "an invisible neutral in the field" (Flick, 2007, p. 7). They construct the interview around a topic of their choice and drive the conversation to pursue the goals of their research. One of the advantages of semi-structured interviews is that researchers can probe for more detail through spontaneous prompts and questions driven by the participant's line of conversation. The researcher guides the conversation through the choice of which topics and disclosures to follow up with further questions, all whilst 'doing rapport' to encourage participants' active participation in the interview process (Duncombe & Jessop, 2002; Kvale, 1996). Interviews are "an interactional event" (Mann, 2016, p. 198) that create

an interrelational space between researcher and participant. Interviews thus become negotiated conversations; the researcher helps co-construct the conversation and becomes part of the meaning-making process (Rapley, 2001).

As researcher, I contributed to the co-construction of interview data through the choices I made about when to introduce new topic questions, which disclosures to follow up, and how and when I sought clarifications from participants. I was conscious that I had introduced a definition of the topic I was investigating and worked to encourage participants to reflect upon their reactions to that definition. When participants asked what I thought of the definition I used, as happened in most focus groups, I endeavoured to give answers that affirmed their right to critically approach what appeared to be an official definition, such as “I do wonder what a ‘digital citizen’ looks like and what they do if they meet this definition. What did you think?” or “I did find myself thinking about the way I do things online. What about you?”. I was conscious, as I analysed the interviews, of the role I played in the production of data and meaning-making.

#### **4.4.2 The analysis process**

Analysis is an iterative process that occurs throughout the data collection process and informs subsequent steps (Creswell, 2007; Ritchie, Spencer, & O'Connor, 2003; Spencer, Ritchie, & O'Connor, 2003). My initial analysis of each focus group informed the way I conducted subsequent groups, as well as shaped the individual interviews of focus group members. The analysis process began during the interview and was made visible as I listened, prompted, and invited elaboration from participants on topics.

Data analysis continues through the transcription process, as the recorded words are interpreted, and speech is re-constructed and re-produced as written text (see for example, Bloor et al., 2001; Mann, 2016; Nordstrom, 2015). There is debate over the value of transcribing interviews, especially focus groups to written text form. Bloor et al. (2001) argues that, for academic research, focus groups should always be transcribed to written text to avoid selective analysis that misses the richness of the data. On the other hand, Clausen (2012, p. 12) notes that transcriptions of audio-recordings have become “a methodological paradigm”, that potentially leads to decontextualized analysis of written text. All transcription is selective and potentially biased because there is no way to fully capture the conversational performance in notational form (Clausen, 2012; Erickson, 2006). Recording

and transcription are discursive moves that construct and bind the interview (Nordstrom, 2015), and allow the researcher to attempt to ‘re-create’ the interview space away from place and other contextual cues. While audio-recordings may aim to provide a reliable and valid representation of the interview, they are also a form of mediated transcript which fails to capture all the nuances of the interrelational interview space.

My aim was to use my initial analysis of the focus groups to inform the individual interviews in the second phase of data collection. I chose to “transcribe” focus groups selectively as I was most interested in the discursive themes and issues that arose during the group’s collective meaning-making around (digital) citizenship. This involved listening to the audio-recordings multiple times and elaborating upon my post-meeting notes regarding my impressions. Using the adapted model of citizenship (see Section 2.4.1; Mutch, 2005, 2013) as a guide to discourses of citizenship, and with my research questions in mind, I looked for the discourses that participants drew upon in making meaning, and the way meaning-making coalesced around discursive themes and definitions. I noted issues raised by individual participants that I wanted to follow up in the individual interviews, such as views that differed from the collective majority, or specific examples that participants had drawn upon. I paid attention to the discursive cues that participants used, and the way their views aligned or differed from the others in the group. Subsequently, my analysis of the way participants expressed their meaning-making in the focus group shaped their individual interviews as much as my analysis of the group’s collective meaning-making.

In the individual interviews, I was looking at individual meaning-making so chose to work with written transcripts. While I transcribed the majority of interviews myself, I employed transcribers for a third of the individual interviews. I transcribed using Dragon® Naturally Speaking v13(Home) (Nuance, 2015), a speech recognition software that allowed me to use a listen-repeat method to convert the interview recordings to written text. Mann (2016, p. 199) notes that “transcription can be a useful process for ‘noticing’ and then ‘thinking’”. As I transcribed, I began to note my preliminary thoughts and meaning-making of what was said, taking into account the audible non-verbal cues, such as tone, emphasis, and laughter, that I could hear on the recordings, and that would enable richer interpretations during the analysis phase (Gronnerod, 2004). For interviews that were transcribed by others, I regained familiarity with the data (Denscombe, 1999) by (re)reading the transcripts while listening to the interview. As I went through transcripts prepared by others, I corrected errors

or omissions and made notes on the same features I had noted during the interviews that I transcribed. While some of the nonverbal cues, such as ‘ummm’, are removed from the final quotes reported, the presence of non-verbal cues in the broader conversation transcript enriched the analysis, for example by indicating the participant was uncertain or considering their answer.

Participants were offered the opportunity to check their transcripts for accuracy before analysis began. Only two participants wished to check transcripts of the individual interviews and neither made any amendments. This process of ‘member-checking’ transcripts has been touted by some as a way to improve the quality and trustworthiness of qualitative research (Kornbluh, 2015; Lincoln & Guba, 1985, as cited in D. R. Thomas, 2017; Tong, Craig, & Sainsbury, 2007). Returning transcripts allows the participant to check that the transcript reflects what they feel is an accurate account of what was said. Another option for member-checking is asking participants to check the initial analyses and themes as a way of ensuring the trustworthiness and validity of the analysis (D. R. Thomas, 2017). In the case of this research, the individual interviews provided opportunities to check with individual participants the themes and discourses I had identified from the focus groups. Raising themes as part of my questioning technique gave participants the chance to rebut or affirm my initial analysis and elaborate upon the meaning they wished to make explicit.

#### **4.4.3 Using discourse analysis as an analytical tool**

Drawing upon discourse analysis allowed me to examine how young people brought into being their understanding of the concept of digital citizenship (Dunn & Neumann, 2016). There are a wide variety of approaches to ‘discourse analysis’ (Dunn & Neumann, 2016; Fairclough, 2003), therefore it is important for the researcher to be clear about the questions they ask of the data (Willig, 2014). Fairclough (2003, p. 14) notes that, “in any analysis, we choose to ask certain questions about social events and texts, and not other possible questions”. My questioning of the text was shaped by my research questions (RQ) regarding (digital) citizenship (see Table 4-1), the way participants responded to the line of questioning, and my positioning as researcher. In my analysis, I sought to identify the discourses that shaped young people’s meaning-making, and the common themes that arose, as they talked about their lived experiences of digital citizenship. As noted in Table 2.1, I adapted Mutch’s model of citizenship in New Zealand (see Section 2.4.1; Mutch, 2005, 2013) to arrive at six discourses of citizenship: as status; as identity; as belonging; as the

democratic ideal; as public practice; and as participation. These discourses of citizenship, along with discourses of digital citizenship, discourses of digital spaces and discourses about young people as identified in the literature (see Chapters 2 & 3) underpinned my questioning of the data.

I analysed the transcripts of the interviews using the software programme, HyperRESEARCH™ (Researchware Inc., 2015), a qualitative analysis tool that allows for coding of text, video, and image sources. After importing all transcripts of individual interviews for coding, I read and re-read through the transcripts within HyperRESEARCH™ and coded passages of text with the research questions in mind. With each reading, the number of coding additions and changes lessened. In reading through transcripts, my analysis focussed on how the participants were constructing citizenship and digital citizenship, how participants appeared to be drawing upon and re-producing discourses, and how these discourses shaped participants' views. Initially, this 'free coding' (Burnard, 1991) generated over 100 codes which I subsequently coalesced to 68 codes. Informed by my initial analysis of the focus groups and my reading of the literature, I grouped the codes into core discursive themes of citizenship (as belonging/connectedness, as democratic ideal, as legal status, as membership of a group, as participation, and as public practice) and of digital citizenship (as digitally-mediated belonging/connectedness, as practice, as rights, as social responsibility, as participation, and as transmediated). I then generated reports of each theme for all participants, printed these, and read through again, selecting and discarding quotes for illustrating the findings.

At this point, I imported the audio-recordings of the focus Groups and coded sections of the recordings using the themes generated by my analysis of the individual interviews. I had not had access to HyperRESEARCH™ during the focus group analysis, so revisiting the thematic analysis provided a way to check my own analysis. From these themes, the structure of the findings began to emerge. However, analysis continues during the 'writing up' of findings. I was conscious that removing quotes from the full transcript carries the risk of decontextualizing the data (Burnard, 1991). I found that as I wrote the findings, there were times I referred to the full transcript to re-check the context of quotes and stay immersed in the data.



## 4.5 Summary

In this chapter, I have outlined my constructivist-interpretivist methodological stance to designing the research. At the heart of my approach was a desire to prioritise the voice of my participants as a way to recognise young people as experts on their own lived experiences and to counter the primarily adult-centric discussions of (digital) citizenship. I have explained how I adopted a two-part approach to data collection, first collectively exploring meaning-making around concepts of digital citizenship in focus groups, before exploring individual meaning-making in more depth through individual interviews.

I have explored the ethical considerations in this research in some depth, perhaps unsurprisingly given my positioning as a member of an ethics advisory committee. I have outlined my reasoning for decisions made at the procedural ethics stage (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004) including my considerations around vulnerability and consent, risk, and confidentiality. However, not all ethical dilemmas can be anticipated by the formal ethics review process and procedural ethics. Hence, I have discussed how I reflexively approached several ethical dilemmas that arose during my research journey.

I have outlined the iterative and inductive analysis approach I followed in which I repeatedly queried the data to explore participants' meaning-making. I have highlighted my role as researcher participating in negotiated conversations with participants and potentially shaping the meaning-making process. I have explained how, drawing upon the research questions and literature, I coded the interviews into core discursive themes around citizenship and digital citizenship and then re-visited the data to check my analysis and arrive at the findings of this thesis.

I referred in my methods approach to the way I used a 'formal' definition of digital citizenship that is promoted to schools by the New Zealand Ministry of Education as a prompt for discussion. In the next chapter, the first of my four findings chapters, I offer a brief discursive account of the publicly available material from the Netsafe website as an indication of the discursive field in which digital citizenship is constructed. I discuss the way the young people in this study reacted to the 'idealised' definition and place that alongside the participants' own definitions of digital citizenship that recognised the messy realities of lived experiences. I then move in Chapter 6 to explore the discourses that shaped the way participants made sense of their lived experiences. In Chapter 7, I look at the ways these

young people located their (digital) citizenship in place and space. In the final findings chapter, Chapter 8, I explore the ways young people make meaning explicit through their doing of digital citizenship. I then move onto the final chapter, where I outline my concluding argument that young people understand digital citizenship through their lived experiences in ways that may not align with idealised conceptualisations and offer recommendations.

## **Chapter 5: Confronting the 'Ideal' Digital Citizen**

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As the first of the four findings chapters, Chapter 5 situates my research through focussing upon the reactions of young people when presented with the definition of a 'successful digital citizen' available to New Zealand schools. In previous chapters, I outlined the Netsafe definition of the New Zealand digital citizen (see Chapter 3) and how and why I introduced this definition to my participants (see Chapter 4). As a brief reminder, the Netsafe definition of digital citizenship is endorsed by the New Zealand Ministry of Education and promoted to schools, via the Ministry of Education Te Kete Ipurangi website, as a resource for teaching digital citizenship. For this research, I utilised this definition as an entry point into the research and a discussion prompt. As the definition of 'digital citizen' played such a key role in the research, I start here to provide context for the following chapters regarding the ways young people in this study made sense of their digital citizen habitus.

Educating for 'digital citizenship' requires a definition of what being and doing 'digital citizen' may entail that serves to create an 'ideal' conceptualisation (see Chapter 3). I argue that implicitly, definitions of 'digital citizen', such as the list of criteria proffered by Netsafe, serve to construct digital citizenship as aspirational and measurable (de Koning et al., 2015) which may also denote who is included, and who is excluded. Importantly, if citizenship criteria are judged as irrelevant by young people, then young people are likely to feel disaffected and less likely to engage with the citizenship values expressed (Bolstad, 2012; R. Hipkins & Satherley, 2012). While the young people in this study did not question the authority of Netsafe to prescribe a definition, they did question the criteria used to define and construct 'digital citizenship'.

In this thesis, I conceptualise 'digital citizenship' as digitally-mediated citizenship enacted in online spaces, whereas 'citizenship' refers to practices offline. I utilise the term (digital) citizenship to reference transmediated citizenship practices across interrelational spaces (Blanch, 2015; Holt, 2008; Valentine & Holloway, 2002). I recognise that terminology such as 'online' and 'offline' are discursive constructs that can serve to artificially position digitally-mediated spaces as disconnected (see Chapter 2). Nonetheless, I argue that 'online' and 'offline' can be understood as fluid interrelational spaces of practice, with users fluidly shifting between the materially-mediated 'offline' and digitally-mediated 'online' spaces (Blanch, 2015). How and what people think are suitable digital

practices reflects the digital citizen habitus that has formed through making sense of experiences in a discursive context.

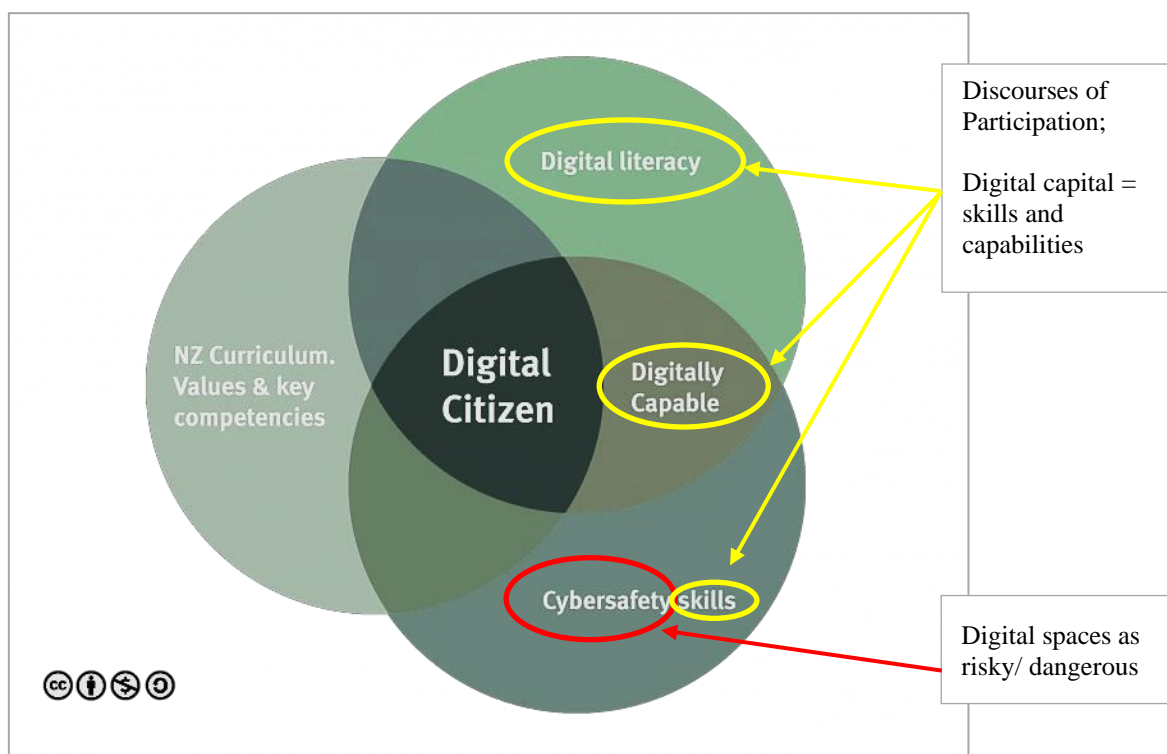
I present this chapter in four sections. In Section 5.1, I briefly analyse the discourses inherent in the Ministry of Education sanctioned definitions of digital citizenship from Netsafe, as shown through the Netsafe website and the list of criteria defining key attributes and competencies of a 'successful digital citizen'. In Section 5.2, I contend that this definition was not meaningful for the participants. I explore the ways young people reacted to the definition and outline how they described the criteria as encouraging a tick-the-box approach, pushed back against assumptions they perceived underpinned the criteria, and critiqued what they perceived as ambiguous and complex criteria. In the third section, Section 5.3, I outline how these young people themselves defined digital citizenship. I conclude by arguing that unquestioned definitions seek to shape young people's habitus and extend nation-state control of citizen behaviours into digitally-mediated spaces.

## **5.1 Constructing the 'Ideal' New Zealand Digital Citizen**

In Chapter 3, I outlined how the definition of digital citizenship, that is sanctioned and promoted by the Ministry of Education to New Zealand schools, is provided by Netsafe, a New Zealand-based, "independent, non-profit online safety organisation" (<https://www.netsafe.org.nz/aboutnetsafe/>). As noted in Section 3.2.3, the Netsafe definition outlines an aspirational list of nine key attributes for a New Zealand digital citizen, involving both digital capital and digital habitus, which shape digital citizenship practices (see Table 3-2; Table 5-1). This definition of citizenship is embedded within the e-Learning section of the New Zealand Ministry of Education Te Kete Ipurangi (TKI) education portal (Te Kete Ipurangi, n.d.-d) as a resource for educators, as well as in template documents such as the *Netsafe Digital Citizenship Policy for Schools* available for Boards of Trustees (Netsafe, 2012) and other associated 'responsible use' documents for teachers and students (Te Kete Ipurangi, n.d.-a). I was therefore interested in the discursive cues from TKI and Netsafe that may shape the way educators approach digital citizenship.

For educators who access digital citizenship information on the TKI website (Te Kete Ipurangi, n.d.-b), digital citizen and digital citizenship are defined as particular ways of being and doing. The TKI website itself draws primarily upon material from Netsafe's own website. Netsafe's definition with the nine attributes of a digital citizen is prominent

(see Table 3-2), followed by the Netsafe *Digital Citizenship Venn Diagram* illustrating the way digital citizenship aligns to *The New Zealand Curriculum* (see Figure 5-1), and a Netsafe video titled *Digital citizenship and cybersafety* (Te Kete Ipurangi, n.d.-b). Through these resources, the digital citizen is defined as having digital capital in terms of “critical thinking skills”, “digital literacy”, digital capabilities, and “cybersafety skills” (Te Kete Ipurangi, n.d.-b). Moreover, the digital citizen is envisioned as having a habitus that leads them to do digital citizenship in particular ways: confidently, honestly, respectfully, positively, collaboratively, and in ways that reflect notions of participation and contributing to society (Te Kete Ipurangi, n.d.-b). Furthermore, online spaces are constructed as spaces of opportunity where young people can participate, make “positive connections”, and be successful citizens (Te Kete Ipurangi, n.d.-b). As an example, Figure 5.1 illustrates how the Netsafe Digital Citizenship Venn diagram contains discursive cues about digital spaces as spaces of participation and opportunity (in yellow) and potentially of risk (in red) due to the need to have digital capital in the form of cybersafety skills.



**Figure 5-1** Netsafe Digital Citizenship Venn Diagram

Reprinted from Netsafe. (2015, September 16). Digital citizenship and digital literacy Retrieved from <https://www.netsafe.org.nz/digital-citizenship-and-digital-literacy/> as cited in Te Kete Ipurangi. (n.d.-b). Enabling e-Learning: Teaching: Digital Citizenship. Retrieved from <http://elearning.tki.org.nz/Teaching/Digital-citizenship>.

Discourses around digital citizenship draw upon common constructions of citizenship and digitally-mediated spaces and these are also reflected on the TKI landing page for digital citizenship (Te Kete Ipurangi, n.d.-b). For instance, conceptualisations of citizenship as status involving rights and duties (Dwyer, 2010; Faulks, 2000; Heater, 2004; T. H. Marshall, 1950; Pocock, 1981) are highlighted: “A digital citizen understands the rights and responsibilities of inhabiting cyberspace” (Te Kete Ipurangi, n.d.-b). A later description of digital citizenship as an “enabler of inclusion in social, cultural, and civil society” (Te Kete Ipurangi, n.d.-b) further invokes citizenship as belonging to a community of citizens linked by shared ways of being. The concept of digital citizenship being constructed for educators via TKI is one of status, belonging, and participatory practice in online spaces.

There is an inherent assumption that young people will be online and using digital technologies. From that pragmatic assumption of participation, Netsafe seeks to mitigate risk and promote the use of digital technologies through education and advice campaigns. For instance, young people are given advice on addressing privacy issues across popular platforms as well as addressing negative behaviours they may encounter (Netsafe, n.d.-d). Parents are given similar advice, as well as tips on keeping young people safe online. Nevertheless, the overt discourses of risk embedded in the Netsafe website are likely to shape the way educators and parents, and potentially young people themselves, approach young people’s use of digitally-mediated spaces.



Although a discourse of opportunity is woven throughout the Netsafe (and TKI) material on digital citizenship (Netsafe, 2018a; Te Kete Ipurangi, n.d.-b), discourses of risk are prevalent. In noting these discourses, I do not wish to understate that some young people do face risk online. However, ‘risk’ and ‘safety’ can be difficult to measure and may be based on subjective perceptions of harm rather than objective evidence (Finkelhor, 2014; Livingstone, 2013; Livingstone & Smith, 2014). What I wish to highlight is that to focus upon removing all risk from digitally-mediated interactions and spaces is a risk in itself, as it may result in limiting opportunities for young people to explore ways of being and doing digital citizenship (W. Clark et al., 2009; Green & Bailey, 2010; Huijser, 2008; Ohler, 2010).

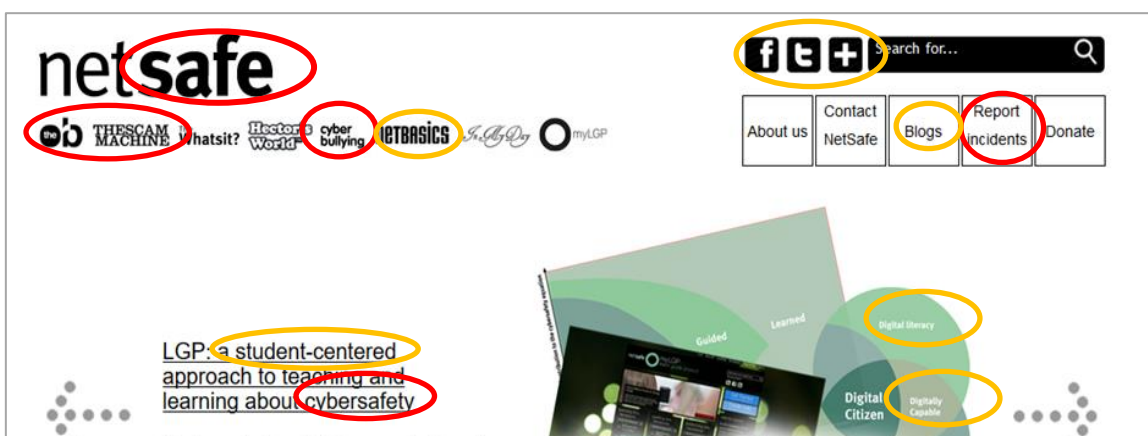
The discursive cues that greet educators accessing resources via the Ministry of Education serve to reinforce discourses of the internet as risky and young people as vulnerable and in need of protection and education. Discourses of risk are made visible on

TKI through labels such as “cybersafety” in provided resources (Te Kete Ipurangi, n.d.-a, n.d.-b), through the professional development modules that encourage educators to focus upon safety, protection, and security, along with supplementary professional development resources that are focussed upon topics such as cyberbullying, sextortion, scams, and other harmful activities (Te Kete Ipurangi, n.d.-a). The problem with such a focus is that discourses of risk and harm regarding digitally-mediated spaces appear to outweigh discourses of opportunity.

Similarly, discourses of risk permeate the Netsafe website. For educators, parents, and young people who access the Netsafe site, discourses of risk are prevalent, beginning with the name of the organisation itself, *Netsafe* [my emphasis], as well as other headings, tabs and highlighted content that emphasise risk. Although the Netsafe website has had several iterations as the organisation has evolved, the prominence of page tabs regarding bullying, abuse, safety issues, scams and links to report harmful incidents has been consistent (see Figures 5-2, 5-3, 5-4, and 5-5). In recent iterations, a shield logo has been added which can be read as implying Netsafe are defending users against risk. The focus shown in the website thus remains upon discourses of risk, with resources for safety and support in the event of harmful incidents, links to cyberbullying support, information regarding online scams, and links where people can report incidents.

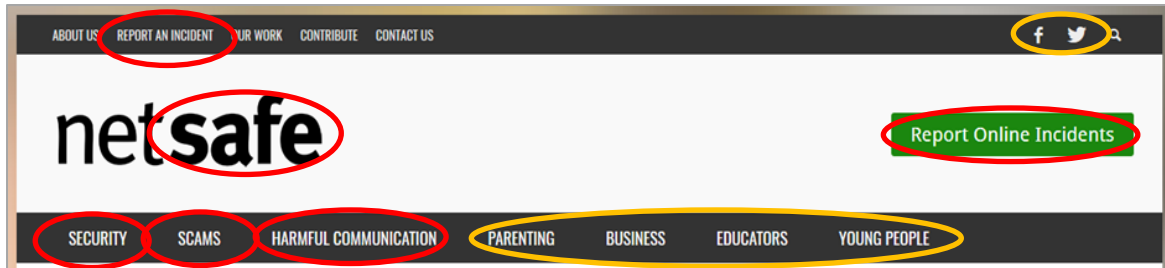
#### Key for Figures 5-2 to 5-5

-  Indicators of discourses of risk
-  Indicators of discourses of participation



**Figure 5-2** Netsafe Home Page Header, May 16, 2014

Reprinted from Netsafe. (n.d.). Home page. Retrieved from <https://www.netsafe.org.nz/>



**Figure 5-3** Netsafe Home Page Header, 2016, May 28

Reprinted from Netsafe. (n.d.). Home page. Retrieved from <https://www.netsafe.org.nz/>



**Figure 5-4** Netsafe Home Page Header, 2018, June 2

Reprinted from Netsafe. (n.d.). Home page. Retrieved from <https://www.netsafe.org.nz/>



**Figure 5-5** Netsafe Home Page Header, 2019

Reprinted from Netsafe. (n.d.). Home page. Retrieved from <https://www.netsafe.org.nz/>

Importantly, Netsafe (Netsafe, 2015, September 16, 2018a, n.d.-b, n.d.-c), and therefore TKI, construct digital citizenship as a set of criteria (see Table 5-1) incorporating the attitudes, behaviours, and skills that inform ‘good’ digitally-mediated practices (Mossberger, Tolbert, et al., 2008b; Netsafe, n.d.-c; Ohler, 2010; Ribble, 2011). The ideal New Zealand digital citizen possesses the digital capital and habitus to be an ‘effective’ digital citizen (Mossberger, Tolbert, et al., 2008b). Because Netsafe’s definition of a New Zealand digital citizen draws upon the desired competencies and values of the New Zealand Curriculum (Netsafe, 2012), this definition reflects the cumulative reinforcement of societal norms and discourses around what it means to be a ‘good’ citizen in New Zealand. Desired



attributes and competencies, such as participating and contributing that are valued as 'offline' ways of being and doing citizen, are re-presented as preferable ways of being and doing in digitally-mediated spaces.

**Table 5-1** *Revisiting the Netsafe Definition of the New Zealand Digital Citizen*

<b>The successful digital citizen in New Zealand:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is a confident and capable user of ICT</li> <li>• uses technologies to participate in educational, cultural, and economic activities</li> <li>• uses and develops critical thinking skills in cyberspace</li> <li>• is literate in the language, symbols, and texts of digital technologies</li> <li>• is aware of ICT challenges and can manage them effectively</li> <li>• uses ICT to relate to others in positive, meaningful ways</li> <li>• demonstrates honesty and integrity and ethical behaviour in their use of ICT</li> <li>• respects the concepts of privacy and freedom of speech in a digital world</li> <li>• contributes and actively promotes the values of digital citizenship</li> </ul>

Source: Netsafe. (2015, September 16). Digital citizenship and digital literacy. Retrieved from <https://www.netsafe.org.nz/digital-citizenship-and-digital-literacy/>

Young people's participation is often constructed by adults in ways that dismiss young people's agency and practices (Baraldi & Cockburn, 2018; Beals & Wood, 2012; Hartung, 2017; Lister, 2007b, 2007c; B. E. Wood, 2010). Arguably, constructing normative behaviours and dispositions for digitally-mediated spaces is about reasserting control over young people whose digital practices may challenge adult-ist discourses of the 'becoming' young citizen. Defining and classifying is a form of social control that reinforces the social hierarchy and power relations in the field (Cameron, 2001). Ultimately, the discursive cues regarding desired dispositions, attitudes, and appropriate participatory behaviours are working to shape the individual digital citizenship habitus to match a collective societal habitus.

Furthermore, the skills and competencies listed in the nine-point definition may not be relevant to the ways young people wish to use digitally-mediated spaces. The definition outlines competencies such as possessing the skills to be a "capable user of ICT", being "literate in the language, symbols, and texts of digital technologies", and able to effectively manage "ICT challenges" whilst using "technologies to participate" (Netsafe, 2012, 2015, September 16, n.d.-b, n.d.-c). However, knowing the "languages" of digital technologies is

not necessary if the predominant use of digitally-mediated spaces is for communication, or passive entertainment. Even posting and sharing one's own content does not require more than a fundamental knowledge of the tools provided by internet platforms, such as Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, Blogger, WordPress, and so on. A definitive set of criteria may seem unrealistic and may not align with the way young people construct digital citizenship and understand their ways of being and doing online.

Constructing digital citizenship through a list of criteria neglects the fluid, ongoing process of being and doing citizen. Creating a set of seemingly static and definable criteria risks digital citizenship being perceived as a 'tick-the-box' status or goal, even when worded in subjective or general terms (Hartley, 2010; Third & Collin, 2016). In this case, the list of attributes and competencies in the definition created by Netsafe might be read as implying that for young people to achieve the status of digital citizen they must be able to 'tick off' criteria, whether they are actively participating online or not. Constructing digital citizenship in ways that encourage a focus upon criteria encourages a view of young people as 'becoming' citizens working towards digital citizenship status, rather than as young citizens already doing citizen practices online.

I turn now to the ways young people reacted to the definition of the New Zealand digital citizen when it was introduced as a focus group prompt.

## **5.2 Challenging Netsafe's Definition of the New Zealand Digital Citizen: "It is Sort of Ambiguous"**

None of the participants remembered hearing the term 'digital citizenship' before this research, even though the concept of digital citizenship is part of the Netsafe Kit for Schools, which has been available to schools in various forms since 2000 (Netsafe, n.d.-a). While this may indicate that the schools attended by the participants did not utilise the Netsafe Kit as a resource, it is possible that their teachers used different terminology when talking about digital practices. Nevertheless, language is power (Bourdieu, 1977; Foucault, 1972). If teachers have not used the term 'digital citizenship', then young people will not have the necessary capital to understand and identify their digital practices as enactments of digital citizenship.

Although he had not heard the term before this study, one participant in the Community group was prepared to guess at what digital citizenship might entail, which then led to others contributing their thoughts:

KEELY: Have you ever heard of digital citizenship?

[general chorus of 'no' from group]

M4<sup>8</sup> (Community Group): Not really, no. But from what I've picked up, like I could be completely wrong, but like your whole, like, your Facebook personas or that sort of thing, like, digital you.

M1 (Community Group): belonging on the internet?

M2 (Community Group): More specifically, you can go from what [M1] said to belonging in like, forums and like, those sort of groups . . . gaming communities.

These three participants from the Community Group postulated that digital citizenship involved performative acts such as creating personas, the “digital you” (M4, Community Group), within digitally-mediated communities such as Facebook. Specifically, they went on to highlight that digital citizenship may be about belonging in digitally-mediated spaces. Given M4's statement about having ‘picked up’ hints, I considered the possibility that I had provided cues in the information and consent forms about the research that may have discursively constructed digital citizenship. Although the research paperwork did not mention ‘Facebook’ and ‘personas’, there was mention of belonging and community, as well as connectedness and participation. It is possible that the participants applied the discursive cues within the information sheet to contexts with which they were familiar, such as Facebook and gaming communities. Nonetheless, the participants recognised the social aspects of citizenship such as connection to, and membership of, groups (T. H. Marshall, 1950).

Online communities were important to these participants. Most of the participants in the Community Group were keen online gamers, often with and against each other as well as geographically distant others. M2's comment about gaming communities sparked a

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<sup>8</sup> Focus group participants are referred to as M (male) or F (female) and numbered in the order in which they first spoke in the focus group discussion.

boisterous conversation separate from myself as the interviewer, about the specific gaming communities to which the participants belonged and their latest games. Although seemingly disconnected from the topic being discussed at the time, I read this as a form of collective positioning (Vivienne et al., 2016), where this group of young people were collectively 'speaking' "themselves and their communities into being" (to paraphrase boyd, 2007, p. 14). Yuval-Davis (2011) notes that belonging is performative, formed partly through practices related to location, and partly through "identifications and emotional attachments" (p. 14) to the group. In making visible their membership of gaming communities and sites such as Facebook, these participants could be read as reaffirming their connections to each other and to their digitally-mediated communities. These young people not only positioned themselves as citizens of gaming communities, but co-constructed and reinforced their affinity and sense of belonging to their community (Vivienne et al., 2016). This group's reactions show participants already held discursively influenced perceptions of digital citizenship even when reporting they had not previously heard the term.

While the participants may not have recognised the term 'digital citizenship', when the definition of a digital citizen was introduced as a prompt, the name 'Netsafe' was more recognisable. Nonetheless, knowledge of the Netsafe organisation seemed elusive and uncertain among many participants, and at times the responses could be read as participants 'guessing' at the organisation's purpose. Interestingly, some participants recognised the discursive cues given by the name, 'Netsafe' [my emphasis added], and presumed the organisation perhaps took a protectionist role online. Others who had heard of Netsafe variously explained Netsafe's role as educative - "They teach you to keep safe and stuff" (F2<sup>9</sup>, Tertiary Group 2); as protective - "Yeah, security on the internet" (M1, Kikorangi College) "and cyberbullying" (F1, Kikorangi College); as a source of support - "Don't they have a hotline as well?" (F4, Tertiary Group 2); and as an authoritarian enforcement - "they find paedophiles on the internet" (F1, Waiporoporo College). While there was confusion over the exact role Netsafe plays in digital spaces, in conjecturing that Netsafe plays a protective, supportive, and/or authoritarian role, these young people reflect common discursive constructions of digitally-mediated spaces as spaces of risk and danger (see for

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<sup>9</sup> Focus group participants are referred to as M (male) or F (female) and numbered in the order in which they first spoke in the focus group discussion.

example, boyd, 2014; De Souza & Dick, 2008; Finkelhor, 2014; Livingstone, 2008; Mesch, 2009). Vivienne et al. (2016) note that digital norms are still in flux and subject to regulation and control. If Netsafe is perceived by participants as trying to control participation in digitally-mediated spaces then there may be resistance, and/or compliance, to the criteria included in the definition. Potentially, the way participants construct Netsafe may shape their reading of the definition that Netsafe provides.

Interestingly, none of the participants challenged why Netsafe and the Ministry of Education (on behalf of the New Zealand state) should assume the authority to define what counts as digital citizenship and appropriate ways of doing digital citizen. As such, participants performed as 'good' citizens respecting the authority of the state to define acceptable behaviours for citizens (Pykett et al., 2010). Nevertheless, whilst these young people did not question 'who' determined the qualities of digital citizenship, they did challenge the way digital citizenship was being constructed through the terminology and scope of the various criteria.

Inherent in any definition of digital citizenship is an assumption, or sometimes goal, of participation in digitally-mediated spaces. Most participants did not question the implicit expectation that people will participate in digitally-mediated spaces. However, Molly<sup>10</sup> (Kikorangi College) pushed back against assumptions of participation, although she acknowledged the pressure to participate:

I don't reckon they should assume or make people go on the internet, 'cause some people don't feel comfortable going on the internet, or like, don't even know how to use the internet, but, yeah . . . I reckon nowadays you have to (laughs) (Molly, Kikorangi College).

Molly argued that participation in digitally-mediated spaces should not be assumed, as people may not have the digital habitus or capital to participate. Indeed, a small number of New Zealanders are uninterested in participating online due to safety concerns, financial concerns, and/or a lack of confidence and skills to engage (Bascand, 2013). Mossberger, Tolbert, et al. (2008) note that disparities in internet use often reflect existing social inequalities. Meanwhile, technology use is a participatory stimulus, with those who use

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<sup>10</sup> All names used are pseudonyms

technology more increasing their skills and participation (Hargittai & Hinnant, 2008; Mossberger, Tolbert, et al., 2008b). Molly's push back (Garrett & Segall, 2013) against online participation may be a reflection of social justice concerns over digital inequalities. Alternatively, Molly's resistance could be read as an indication of how confident or 'at-home' she herself feels when participating in digitally-mediated spaces. Indeed, during her interview, Molly explained that her family emphasised face-to-face communication as more trustworthy than social media and did not currently have internet access at home. Pushing back allowed Molly an opportunity to voice resistance and question digital participation as a requisite citizenship practice.

For several participants, the criteria for a successful New Zealand digital citizen (see Table 5-1) seemed unrealistic. When comparing their own citizenship practices to the ways of being and doing digital citizen outlined by the Netsafe definition, they were sceptical as to whether the attributes and competencies outlined were achievable. For instance, when they were interviewed together, Reggie and Cheekie (Kikorangi College) raised concerns that anyone could honestly claim to meet all the criteria:

Cheekie (Kikorangi College): I don't think I could tick every single one of them. I could probably tick half of them... I don't think every single body can tick all those boxes.

Reggie (Kikorangi College): unless they lie (laughs).

Cheekie started by constructing the criteria in the definition as aspirational goals, boxes to be 'ticked' once achieved, although he felt he would be unable to 'tick' off the full set of criteria himself. Framing digital citizenship through normative criteria serves to construct digital citizenship as measurable and aspirational goals (de Koning et al., 2015), and as a status to be achieved which potentially excludes those who do not meet the criteria. By acknowledging he could not meet all the criteria, Cheekie positioned himself in the interview as an 'almost' digital citizen. Reggie's statement that those who did claim to achieve all the criteria would be lying could be read as support for his friend and perhaps an acknowledgment that he too did not feel he could meet the criteria. Equally, Cheekie and Reggie's critiques could be read as pushing back against a definition that may exclude them from the status of digital citizen and negate their digital practices as inadequate. Like others who openly compared their own practices to the definition, the criteria seemed unfeasible.

For others, the scope of the definition was too broad, and the criteria listed were ambiguous and subjective. Ambiguity and lack of detail may encourage the perception that citizenship criteria are irrelevant (Bolstad, 2012; R. Hipkins & Satherley, 2012). For these participants, the subjective nature of criteria and a lack of clear detail made it harder to gauge progress against the criteria. For instance, Zach (Waiporoporo College) was frustrated by the ambiguity of having digital practices measured as acceptable, or not, based upon broad and subjective criteria: “I think it is sort of ambiguous though like, if I’m a person who illegally downloads one or two movies, am I just as bad as someone who does it all the time?”. Definitions construct measurable goals (de Koning et al., 2015). However, if the criteria against which citizenship is measured is too broad, it may serve to exclude, or perhaps include unnecessarily. While it can be argued that any unauthorised downloading breaches the principles of ‘honesty and integrity’, young people were pushing boundaries and leading a discursive shift with regard to copyright and constructions of ownership in many of the interviews. I return to this point further in Chapter 8, when I discuss young people’s doing digital citizenship practices in more detail. For now, I interpret Zach’s frustration as resisting criteria that do not seem to account for different ways of doing digital practices. For those participants who critiqued the criteria as too broad and subjective, the definition of digital citizenship may not seem relevant or meaningful.

For some of the older participants, the definition focussed on the wrong skills. These older participants decried what they felt was an over-emphasis on advanced technological skills and argued instead for an emphasis on the emotional and dispositional skills they felt were necessary for ‘everyday’ use of digital technologies. For instance, Zoey (Tertiary Group) dismissed the need for everyone to learn advanced technical skills:

that’s just, it’s for *some* people to do. We learn from them, they break down the steps. And we take the simple steps. It’s not a necessary skill for everyone to learn. I think it’s much more important that we focus on... like the reality online, compared to the reality in life, cos the emotional aspect, I think that’s so much more important than this coding. Like the influence people have from online and how they get affected and they can’t see beyond what’s online and then, that’s so much more important...[emphasis in original] (Zoey, Tertiary Group).

Zoey differentiated between the emotional impacts of using technology to interact within digitally-mediated spaces and possessing a detailed knowledge of how to use technology. She argued instead that priority should be given to learning to negotiate the interpersonal communications of digitally-mediated interrelational spaces. In doing so, Zoey echoes calls from L. M. Jones and Mitchell (2016) to separate the simple steps of digital literacy skills from the interpersonal social skills that foster citizenship attributes. In recognising the emotional impact of digitally-mediated interactions and practices, I contend that Zoey is drawing upon notions of lived citizenship, or the everyday participatory citizenship practices (B. E. Wood, 2010) that constitute young people's lived experiences. Everyday citizenship practices and experiences are often overlooked (B. E. Wood, 2010) and may differ from those expressed within definitions of citizenship (MacKian, 1995). Shifting the focus from technical skills to relationships highlights the 'citizenship' aspect of digital citizenship and reflects the concept of 'online' as spaces transmediating material and relational spaces (Blanch, 2015; L. M. Jones and Mitchell, 2016).

Framing the 'digital citizen' as possessing a particular set of attributes and competencies discursively constructs the digital citizen habitus as a way of being that is embodied through particular practices, or ways of doing citizenship. When shown the definition of the New Zealand digital citizen, participants resisted assumptions of participation, resisted being measured against 'ambiguous' criteria, called for more relevant criteria that reflected young people's lived experiences, and offered their own definitions of digital citizenship.

### **5.3 (Re)defining Digital Citizenship: "Don't be a Dick"**

Asked how they might (re)define digital citizenship, many participants drew upon similar concepts to those underpinning formal definitions, such as participation, contribution, and community. Digital citizenship was understood as participating in a digitally-mediated society, even if, as some participants argued, people were unaware of that participation:

it is pretty much ... really just participating in the first world sort of because everything in the first world has some online connection in some way and everything that you do has something that somehow connects to an online thing and even without realising it most people are digital citizen (Chairan, Kikorangi College).



Chairan acknowledged that modern life is increasingly digitally connected in a way that means most people will have some presence online and could thus be called digital citizens. Whereas Molly earlier resisted assumptions that people would participate, Chairan argued that it is impossible to avoid passive participation in online spaces. In New Zealand, citizens are drawn online from birth as e-government increasingly moves citizen records and interactions into digital spaces (Digital.Govt.NZ, 2018). When a presence online is unavoidable, digital habitus and digital capital may not be necessary in order to be a digital citizen.

Whilst some participants felt people unknowingly could be labelled digital citizen, others felt digitally-mediated spaces offered more choice about participating as digital citizens. These participants felt that choosing to actively participate in digitally-mediated spaces, and how to participate, was more optional compared to offline citizenship. For instance, Antonio (Tertiary Group) referenced discursive expectations of citizenship practices that construct ways of being and doing citizen: “I feel it’s compulsory to be a citizen and actively do something and be useful in real life. Whereas online it’s sort of optional” (Antonio, Tertiary Group). Antonio constructed the citizen habitus and practices as participatory and contributory offline but felt those practices did not necessarily have to be enacted in digitally-mediated spaces. Moreover, Antonio constructs offline citizenship practices as subject to authority and compulsion while reinforcing constructions of digitally-mediated spaces as spaces free of oversight (boyd, 2014). For Antonio, the digital citizen habitus is not necessarily embodied in the same way as the citizen habitus, and offline and online spaces engender distinct citizenship practices.

For some participants, digital citizenship was about choosing and defining their own digital spaces in which to participate. Kate (Tertiary Group), for instance, noted that membership and being a citizen of online communities is self-determined, whereas being a citizen offline as a member of a nation-state has pre-determined geo-boundaries:

a digital citizen is again an individual person... Who is a part of an online community where the borders are chosen by themselves? I think that would probably be an important distinction. Like if you are a citizen the borders are defined for you, but an online citizen you kind of define your borders yourself more. . . . so, an individual person who defines the borders of their community and again gives and takes from that community in an online sense. . . . giving

out information . . . giving attention to advertising, but then from that you're taking, you know, enjoyment and connections and all that kind of stuff (Kate, Tertiary Group).

For Kate, digitally-mediated spaces provide opportunities for digital citizens to determine their own boundaries. However, Kate outlined that online spaces still carried expectations of participation, albeit in ways appropriate to digitally-mediated interrelational spaces, such as sharing information and in return people gained a sense of connection and enjoyment. In digitally-mediated spaces, young people take on the role of prosumer, producing and sharing content whilst 'consuming' products, such as websites or advertising (Beer & Burrows, 2010; Ritzer, 2013; Ritzer & Jurgenson, 2010). Being able to self-determine communities does not mean young people escape discursive constructions of participation in digitally-mediated spaces. The digital citizen may choose the interrelational spaces they participate in, but there are still expectations around habitus and practice within those spaces.

While there were differing constructions of choice and digital spaces offered, for many participants, digital citizenship was about habitus and practice, or ways of being and doing in digitally-mediated spaces. Participants drew upon constructions of appropriate attitudes and behaviours in the same way formal definitions did, although in more general terms. For instance, Hayes (Tertiary Group) felt digital citizenship was a particular way of being in digital spaces and tied that to ways of doing digital citizen: "just being a decent person if you are going to be interacting online. Not relying on the internet for absolutely everything and compromising your social life and your health" (Hayes, Tertiary Group). For Hayes, being digital citizen was about recognising that habitus and ways of doing were digitally-mediated whilst still affecting offline spaces and physical health if overused.

Several participants drew upon more colloquial terms to describe ways of being and doing online. In doing so, they implicitly drew upon understandings of citizenship as involving responsibilities towards the wider community and community members. For instance, Jacinta (Community Group) constructed access to digitally-mediated spaces as a privilege that meant digital citizens had a responsibility to behave appropriately towards others:

it's like, don't be a dick about it. Don't go and abuse the privilege of the internet, which is an awesome privilege . . . educate people to just not be an arsehole. . . . That's kind of almost not even a digital kind of thing. That's

just like real life society. Yeah, educating people to not be dicks (Jacinta, Community Group).

Interestingly, Jacinta can be read as constructing digital and material, or “real life”, spaces as distinct ‘societies’. Yet she also recognised that habitus and practices transverse media. As she notes, ways of being in digital spaces are not just a “digital kind of thing”, but also reflect everyday ways of being in “real life”. Jacinta constructs citizenship habitus as taught; people need to be educated as digital citizens. Educating for citizenship and digital citizenship recognises that education plays a role in shaping habitus and practice (Brooks & Holford, 2009; Heater, 2004; Mutch, 2005; Ohler, 2010). For Jacinta, educating for digital citizenship is about encouraging appropriate attitudes and behaviours in offline spaces as well as digitally-mediated spaces.

One participant stood out in resisting the entire concept of digital citizenship. Throughout the interviews, as shall be explored in subsequent chapters, Adriano (Community Group) explained how he did not feel like a citizen of a nation-state or a digital citizen. He resisted defining and labelling of habitus, feeling it was socially divisive: “I don't think there needs to be a labelling of, and not even so much of Internet communities, but creating labels and creating subgenres of people just creates hate and creates more prejudice”. For Adriano, calling himself a citizen, whether of a nation or website, was about ceding control to an authority: “That's like giving them [Facebook] the power and the size of like saying you're a country and we are all under Facebook's control just by agreeing to the terms and conditions and that makes us all people of Facebook”. For Adriano, the concept of being digital citizens of websites, such as Facebook, implied that the site had authority and power over users. It should be noted that users are subject to conditions defined and enforced by websites through ‘Terms and Conditions’. However, Adriano constructs being recognised as belonging to a nation or web-based community as positioning the ‘citizen’ as subject to authority. Belonging is social and relational (Leach, 2002; Yuval-Davis, 2011). Belonging, and being recognised as belonging to a community, symbolises that the individual habitus aligns with collective habitus or community ways of being (Halse, 2018; Orton-Johnson, 2014; Yuval-Davis, 2011). In resisting being labelled and identified as (digital) citizen, Adriano resists expectations to conform to particular ways of being and doing.

## 5.4 Summary

For a definition of digital citizenship to hold meaning for young people, it must seem relevant to their lived experiences. Digital citizenship was a term new to my participants. When presented with the definition of digital citizenship promoted by the Ministry of Education, the young people in this research initially resisted what seemed broad and unachievable expectations of digital citizen habitus and practices. They challenged the criteria outlined, with many finding the definition complex, subjective, and ambiguous. As such, it was a term that initially appeared to hold little meaning for them.

Nonetheless, when asked for their definition, the young people in this study drew upon similar constructions of digital citizenship. They variously defined digital citizenship as a status attained through access and a digital presence (Oyedemi, 2012), as participation (Mossberger, Tolbert, et al., 2008b), as prosumption (Beer & Burrows, 2010), as teachable (boyd, 2014; Ohler, 2010; Ribble, 2011, Selwyn, 2009a), and as behaviours, attitudes, and values, or ways of being and doing, that fluidly transmediate between offline and online spaces (Blanch, 2013, 2015; boyd, 2014). Although the details varied, the participants drew upon similar discursive constructions as the Ministry of Education-sanctioned definition to construct digital citizenship as digital habitus and capital, with particular attitudes, dispositions, and practices, as well as relational skills for interrelational spaces.

It was notable that while participants questioned the details of the digital citizenship definition, none queried that there was a definition, nor that it was part of an education programme. Citizenship education programmes and criteria represent the nation-state's attempts to shape individual citizen habitus to align with desired shared ways of being and doing that benefit the nation-state (Brooks & Holford, 2009; de Koning et al., 2015; Delanty, 2003; Heater, 2004; Loader, 2007; Mutch, 2013). Definitions of digital citizenship outline state-sanctioned acceptable ways of doing (Delanty, 2003). Participants appeared to accept the right of the Ministry of Education, on behalf of the nation-state, to define the citizen habitus and what were considered acceptable behaviours in digital spaces.

I began this chapter exploring the discursive cues inherent in the definition and promotion of digital citizenship in education. I highlighted the way discourses of risk were prevalent throughout the TKI and Netsafe websites and resources. These resources are just part of a context focussed on young people's use of digital spaces that constructs and re-

presents digital spaces as risky, whilst simultaneously re-presenting digital spaces as spaces of opportunity and participation. In the next chapter, I turn to the discourses that shape young people's ways of being and doing and how they make sense of their lived (digital) citizenship.

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## **Chapter 6: Shaping (Digital) Citizen Habitus: The Discursive Context**

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As the second of four findings chapters, I focus here on the discursive influences that shape how young people make sense of citizenship and digital citizenship. For young people who are frequently positioned as ‘becoming’ or ‘future’ citizens (Hartung, 2017; Sawyer, Azzopardi, Wickremarathne, & Patton, 2018; Turner, 2016), citizenship is a concept often defined by ‘others’, such as the nation-state, educational authorities, and parents. One of the key points of the previous chapter, Chapter 5, is that definitions of digital citizenship seek to shape people’s habitus and practices by outlining desired ways of being and doing digital citizenship. However, participants challenged the way digital citizenship was ‘officially’ constructed and defined. In this chapter, I explore the ways young people understand and reproduce wider, societal discursive constructions of citizenship and digital citizenship. How these young people understood competing discourses about being and doing (digital) citizen shapes the way they embody their (digital) citizen habitus through digitally-mediated practices.

Young people’s understandings of (digital) citizenship inform, and are informed by, their lived experiences and practices within multiple interrelational spaces. In this chapter, I continue to conceptualise ‘digital citizenship’ as ‘digitally-mediated citizenship’ and utilise the term (digital) citizenship to reference citizenship habitus and practices that transcend interrelational spaces. Although the interviews created an artificial binary in that we tended to discuss ‘online’ and ‘offline’ spaces separately, most of these young people saw no difference between their ‘online’ and ‘offline’ personas or citizenship practices. Instead, they recognised digital technologies as tools that allow (digital) citizens to access and participate in digitally-mediated interrelational spaces.

How young people learn to be and do digital citizenship is shaped by a wider discursive context in which citizenship is constructed in multiple ways. Competing discourses construct young people as vulnerable, ‘becoming’ citizens in need of protection, yet responsabilises them as capable digital citizens with rights and responsibilities. Similarly, digital spaces are constructed as spaces of opportunity and participation, yet also risky spaces that require oversight and control. These competing discourses shape the way young people understand their identities as (digital) citizens and engage in citizenship practices

offline and online. As they pondered the multiple discourses that shaped citizen habitus and practice, these young people re-produced and/or countered dominant discourses. Their discussions therefore served to further construct ways of being and doing (digital) citizenship. Nonetheless, while competing discursive cues work to shape young people's (digital) citizen habitus, they do not necessarily reflect young people's lived realities.

This chapter is organised into five sections. I start with the mixed messages young people receive about being a citizen (Section 6.1). I then turn to the expectations and social norms participants reported regarding their participation (Section 6.2), the rights and responsibilities they expect as citizens of a nation-state (Section 6.3), and how these shaped their understanding of what it means to be and do citizenship. In Section 6.4, I pay attention to the ways these young people made sense of and re-produced discursive cues from friends and family, as well as media and educational authorities regarding digital spaces and their digitally-mediated participation. Finally, I summarise the ways these young people made sense of the multiple competing discursive constructions of how to be and do (digital) citizen(ship).

## **6.1 Mixed Messages of Be(com)ing**

Competing discourses about ways of being and doing citizenship were a source of frustration for many participants. The young people in this study reported mixed messages about their positioning as citizens. They felt they were expected to be and do citizen(ship), whilst also constructed as 'becoming' citizens limited by age and competence (Lister, 2007c).

A common complaint was being aware of expectations to behave in certain ways yet facing social barriers to doing so. Participants described receiving contradictory messages that constructed young people's participation as engaged and active citizens, yet in practice, constrained their ability to participate:

You're expected to be independent and to make your own decisions and all that, yet everything is made for you and you are expected to stay within those boundaries that they've set. And they want us to be the future of the country because we are . . . But they never let the younger generation have a say in what could be done (Betty, Waiporoporo College).



The younger participants, in particular, felt frustrated that although they were encouraged to participate, their age often affected perceptions of their competence:

People will encourage [us to speak up] (laughs), but realistically . . . because of my age, my thoughts may be thought of as just stupid . . . just because someone's young, it doesn't mean they're going to be stupid (Darrel, Waiporoporo College).

These young citizens were frustrated at the contradiction inherent in being positioned as citizen and future leaders, yet with their participatory practices subject to adult control or derision. Notably, the students at Waiporoporo College spoke most extensively about contradictory discourses around youth participation, although it is unclear why. Socially young people occupy a liminal state of be(com)ing; faced with expectations to be active citizens, yet judged as 'becoming' citizens with limited rights to agency and presumed less competent because of their age (Beals & Wood, 2012; Lister, 2007c; Kennelly, 2011; Third & Collin, 2016; Yarwood, 2014). Young people's actions are therefore frequently the focus of adults seeking to control their participation (Beals & Wood, 2012; Lincoln, 2012; Lister, 2007c; Valentine et al., 1998; Weller, 2003).

On the other hand, Ziva, also from Waiporoporo College, was more optimistic that adults and authorities were beginning to accept young people's input:

I think it's getting better. They're accepting that possibly young people, youths, do have an opinion. Like [local council initiative] is being thrown to the people under 20 to make the design and then vote on which design is the best one, which is good, and they're in the process of setting up a youth council which is also good.

Ziva was involved with her school student council and had recently become involved with a local council initiative. Her lived experiences in these roles allowed her to take-up, re-interpret, and re-produce discourses of youth participation and competence. In other words, opportunities to engage in local civic discussions can shape young people's opinions about having an influence through their citizenship practices (Bolstad, 2012; Harris et al., 2007; Weller, 2003).

## 6.2 Expectations of Participation: “Their Own Way of Participating”

Participants reported dominant discourses of citizenship as incorporating participatory practices. For many, participation was constructed as reflecting a reciprocal relationship between citizen and community, as well as between citizens, as Jodie (Tertiary Group) explained:

like, contributing to a community and in a wider sense your country. Like economically and socially, I guess. Um, like supporting business and supporting the economy and stuff like that, but like, also, supporting other people in terms of like, helping those less fortunate and that kind of stuff. Helping and yeah, giving back.

Jodie constructed citizenship practices as contributing to multiple communities and interrelational spaces. She constituted citizenship as not only the formal contributions to nation-state, but also the smaller informal practices that contribute to smaller communities and the interrelational spaces between. Interestingly, Jodie had been part of the Tertiary focus group that renegotiated the location of their group interview after another participant was injured (see Section 4.2.2). Arguably, the citizenship practices of Jodie’s focus group members reflected her construction of citizenship as participation in a way that supports and helps others. Everyday actions, such as rearranging a schedule or meeting place to suit an injured friend, serve as contributory citizenship practices (B. E. Wood, 2012, 2015). It is these everyday relational citizenship practices of helping and giving back that strengthen community relationships (B. E. Wood, 2012, 2015).

Whether participation was necessary in order to be considered a citizen was contested. A few constructed being citizen as an ‘identity’ that includes actively participating within interrelational spaces, ‘giving and taking’ benefits: “you’re a person, like you’re a profile, in part of a community and then you interact with that community, giving and taking from it” (Kate, Tertiary Group). Like Jodie above, Kate referred to reciprocity when talking about the ways citizens interact in communities. Interestingly, at the time Kate was talking about citizenship ‘offline’, but she drew upon language more commonly associated with the ‘online’ context, such as using the term ‘profile’ to describe a personal identity, in order to explain her understanding of the citizen role. Kate had previously referred to the base foundations of citizenship, such as responsibilities in terms of behaviour, as similar whether offline or online. Her use of the term ‘profile’ across

contexts reflects her understanding of habitus as a transmediated way of being that crosses between offline and online interrelational spaces. In Kate's view, such a habitus was participatory.

Some participants, however, resisted constructions of citizenship and the citizen identity as requiring participation. For these participants, predominantly from the Community Group and Kikorangi College, citizenship should not require citizens to participate within the wider community in order to be able to claim rights:

even if I'm not, like if I'm here and I'm not working and I'm hermitting, I haven't fallen off New Zealand. I'm still a citizen . . . just because I'm not interacting with others, it doesn't mean that I am losing my citizenship, or losing my place (Adriano, Community Group).

you could be born here and not participate. You could just be on the dole and stuff and you'd still get all the rights . . . I know people who don't [try to find a job] and they still have rights, and still can vote, and are still legally a New Zealand citizen, but they don't do anything. (Steve, Community Group).

For these participants, citizenship was based upon a legal status that enabled access to rights and thus did not require participation. B. E. Wood (2014) notes that participatory capital varies across social contexts and contributes to differing "vocabularies of citizenship" (Lister, 2003, cited in B. E. Wood, 2014, p. 590) and constructions of participation. It is possible economic circumstances shaped the ways these participants understood citizenship in terms of participation and rights. The majority of the Community Group participants were either seeking work or in part-time low-paid employment, whilst Kikorangi College was a lower-decile school which increases the likelihood that participants came from low socioeconomic circumstances. As such, these groups of young people may have had differing vocabularies of citizenship shaped by their access to various forms of capital and opportunities to participate. This does not mean that these young people did not possess participatory capital or a participatory habitus. Rather, citizenship and participation may be constructed in different ways across different socio-economic groupings.

Indeed, several of the Kikorangi College students defined participation in ways that accounted for individual circumstances and diverse ways of being. They pushed back against the construction of citizenship as participating in the wider community and argued that

everyday citizenship practices were equally valid, even if performed in the private spaces of the home. For instance, Hadley (Kikorangi College) was concerned that there should not be coercion to participate in ways that made individuals uncomfortable:

Some people just aren't comfortable going out and like doing things with strangers and stuff. Some people are homebodies and just like to do their own thing, so I shouldn't think; I don't think they should be forced to do anything.

Meanwhile Chairan (Kikorangi College) felt there needed to be recognition of individual ways of participating: “Every community has their citizens, but some of them you don't really see or take notice of . . . but they're still a citizen, they've got their own way of participating”. Both Hadley and Chairan resisted notions of the actively participating citizen as a citizen identity and encouraged a broader understanding of participation to include everyday practices, such as living in the community. In doing so, they construct citizenship as enacted through the everyday moments of participatory citizenship that often go unnoticed (MacKian, 1995). MacKian (1995) notes that citizenship is too often tied to territorial notions of community and place which ignores the ‘imagined’ spaces where citizenship is initially constructed and performed. The nation-state may be the core relationship that underpins a legal status of citizenship, but as these young people highlight, it is the lived citizenship performed through small everyday practices that underpins a participatory habitus.

### **6.3 Expectations of Citizen Rights and Responsibilities**

Being a legal citizen is a status that allows citizens to claim rights and benefits. The young people in this study had internalised the social norms that constructed citizenship as providing rights and freedoms, as well as imposing responsibilities and obligations. In discussing what it meant to be citizen of a nation-state, almost all of the young people in this study referred to the legal rights granted when status is recognised, such as freedom of speech, rights to participate in the democratic process, rights to access social services such as healthcare, education, and so on. They recognised that these rights conferred benefits that non-citizens may not receive. For instance, most mentioned benefits, such as free or subsidised healthcare and education: “the legal means being part of the country and getting like the benefits and all that sort of stuff, like being able to study and not have to pay more like the international students do” (Emily, Community Group). They understood citizenship

as an exclusionary status and therefore constructed legal citizenship as a resource or form of capital that conferred privilege (Bourdieu, 1986; Calhoun, 1993).

As well as accepting they received benefits from their citizenship status, most of these young people recognised that along with these rights and benefits came obligations to the nation-state and community. They drew upon social constructions of citizenship as a reciprocal or mutually beneficial relationship that carried expectations of citizenship practices (Bellamy, 2008; Dwyer, 2010; Faulks, 2000; Heater, 2004), such as contributing to society:

it's expected that you'll kind of like do your best to contribute in society . . .  
have a job . . . contributing to taxes . . . try to help make it a better place just  
in general (Cloe, Tertiary Group).

However, some participants felt the nation-state's expectations constrained as well as facilitated citizenship practices. Zach (Waiporoporo College), for instance, stressed that the expectations and 'rules' of the nation-state were multi-faceted:

you have to follow a set of rules, but there are also rules in place that protect  
you as well. . . . As a citizen you are granted rights and as well as having to  
follow these rules, you're also given some benefits as well and protected.

Zach and Cloe were among many participants who discursively shifted the concept of passive, legal citizen towards an understanding of the privileged and dutiful citizen following laws and normative processes that shape practices. These participants constructed citizenship status as a capital that can be used to claim rights and benefits, but that is also utilised by the nation-state to impose obligations and shape ways of being citizen.

Accepting social responsibility as part of a reciprocal relationship does not mean that all participants agreed with societal norms and ways of being. Some participants added codicils when discussing expectations to uphold laws and social norms. For about a quarter of the participants, the right to freely disagree with the nation-state's expectations was an important component in regard to their citizenship practices. Darrel (Waiporoporo College) was one participant who acknowledged that even though he did not agree with all laws, he would still work to uphold laws out of a sense of responsibility: "There are some laws I will disagree with (laughs), but . . . I have a responsibility to a certain point to keep in line and respect everything around me". Darrel had internalised societal norms which he claimed to

embody through his citizenship practices. Nonetheless, he claimed the right to express his disagreement:

If I disagree with something, I definitely have the right to say I disagree with it, put my words forward. I mean, I'm part of this, so anything that happens is affecting me and everyone else, so of course my voice matters.

As well as internalising the norms of public practice, Darrel had internalised democratic norms shaping civic and political participation (T. H. Marshall, 1950; Mutch, 2005). Whilst he accepted the citizen's responsibility to respect law, he claimed his rights as citizen to exercise freedom of speech and challenge decisions that affected him as well as others. In doing so, Darrel constructs his participation and exercising of democratic rights as a responsibility of his citizenship.

As well as legal responsibilities, participants constructed citizenship as morally responsible attitudes and behaviours (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004) towards others. They had internalised societal norms that being part of a community meant helping shape and maintain the society in which they lived in ways that would be beneficial individually and for the collective citizenry. For instance, Roseanna (Tertiary Group) provided a detailed explanation of the attitudes and behaviours that made a 'good' citizen:

a good citizen would be the basics . . . the general moral views that you try to bring up if you're bringing up kids. You know, be nice, be respectful, don't hurt other people's feelings . . . the smaller [the community] you get, the more specific I would say your duties to be a good citizen get.

The way participants, such as Roseanna, talked about the 'good' citizen reflected constructions of citizenship practices as embodying respectful and responsible attitudes and behavioural dispositions (Heater, 2004). They constructed citizenship as habitus and practices that reflected particular attitudes and behaviours.

Some participants, however, felt that there were more specific practices expected of citizens. Jacinta (Community Group), for instance, drew upon dominant discursive norms to construct the 'great citizen' as engaging in practices such as being employed, tertiary-educated, and married, yet also fulfilling citizen responsibilities such as staying informed and supporting others:

just keep the society functioning is kind of a thing, like support everything running smoothly. . . . so, I guess like being a great citizen and like getting a job and going off to Uni and marrying a woman. I kind of feel like that's the stuff that people go with, that kind of just support everything. But then there's also stuff like being aware of what's happening and supporting people, and just trying not to have a crazy society.

At the time of the interview, Jacinta was seeking employment, and was not in tertiary study nor married. However, Jacinta could challenge the dominant heteronormative discourses she had expressed of the 'great' or good citizen by including alternative criteria over which she perhaps felt she had more control, such as staying informed and being supportive of others. In doing so, Jacinta, and the other participants who spoke of supporting and helping others, reflect a vision of the personally responsible citizen who performs their citizenship through embodied traits, such as respect and kindness (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004).

Many participants felt that citizen responsibilities involved attitudes and behaviours that transcended the demarcation of online or offline, and reflected a (digital) citizen habitus. For these young people, habitus was embodied fluidly across multiple interrelational spaces through (digital) citizenship practices. However, differing interrelational spaces led to differing views on accountability for behaviours and practices. Some participants, like Adriano (Community Group), felt that habitus and practices did not differ across diverse spaces and thus, (digital) citizens were accountable for their actions: "I think it's all the same as in person . . . You don't sit on the computer and then next thing you become someone else on the cyber web. You are still accountable for everything you are doing". However, other participants felt accountability was less likely because it was easier for people to hide their 'real' identities online:

to be a good citizen online that would be the whole... The same things, respect other people, don't be mean, don't say nasty things, but that's so hard to control on the computer, and harder to control than in real life because it's so easy to hide behind a screen (Roseanna, Tertiary Group).

These participants recognised that the affordances offered by digital technologies made it possible to act in ways that challenged discursive norms of behaviour. Differing views of accountability may reflect the differing digital capital of the participants. For example, Adriano used digital technologies frequently, took steps to maintain his online security, and

had been following political discussions around internet surveillance, whereas Roseanna described herself as less confident online and was less aware of the ways technology use could identify individual users who tried to hide behind a screen. In other words, their views on accountability likely reflected their lived experiences and their expectations of digitally-mediated spaces at the time of the study.

## **6.4 Expectations of Young People and Digital Spaces**

Multiple discourses informed the ways participants understood ways of being and doing citizenship in digital spaces. They constructed digital spaces as spaces of opportunity as well as spaces of risk. Furthermore, participants spoke of the way they and their peers were constructed through competing discourses as competent and participating, yet vulnerable and in need of protection. These young people were aware that there were social expectations of the ways young people participated in digital spaces.

### **6.4.1 Participation and access to digital spaces**

Participation in digital spaces requires access via digital technologies, such as the internet. Almost all of the young people in this study felt that access to the internet and the digitally-mediated spaces it offers was becoming more necessary for digital citizens: “I think it’s becoming more and more a need rather than a want . . . a lot of things are moving towards having to be done online” (Chairan, Kikorangi College). However, participants’ views regarding internet access divided them into two camps: those who felt that internet access was a basic necessity and therefore should be a right; and those who felt that while internet access was often desirable and even perhaps necessary, it should not be a right per se.

About half of participants felt that access to the internet should be considered a citizen right, with many feeling that free public internet access should be provided in public spaces. They spoke about internet access as necessary, in an increasingly digitally-mediated society, for people to access education resources, employment, housing, and benefit support services:

everything is online so I suppose for school children it is a big thing now. At university, and polytech, everything is done online now, so yeah. And jobs, looking for jobs and flats, everything is online and like applying for jobs is



online too. So, I suppose every area should definitely have some kind of free internet access somewhere for those reasons (Jill, Community Group).

For some, this made internet access an equity issue. For instance, provision of internet access was seen as a way to ensure people could engage in civic (digital) citizenship practices:

for those in more poverty-stricken areas, if they don't have internet and they can't get to a place that offers free internet, then that can be a problem. And we should put more conscious effort into reaching out to those people and getting them to have a say (Hayes, Tertiary Group).

As an equity issue, access to the internet and digitally-mediated spaces was understood to be cultural capital that enabled (digital) citizenship practices. This group of participants constructed access to digitally-mediated spaces as necessary for encouraging citizenship participation and providing increased opportunities for employment and education (Mossberger, Tolbert, et al., 2008b; Oyedemi, 2012, 2015a; Servaes, 2003; United Nations Human Rights Council Resolution 32/L.20).

On the other hand, about half the participants felt internet access should not be a 'right' of (digital) citizenship. This group of participants disagreed that internet access was necessary and considered it more a privilege or a tool that people 'wanted', rather than 'needed'. As Alen (Tertiary Group) bluntly stated, "it's not a necessity for living, so it's not a right". Indeed, one participant, Tomas (Tertiary Group), further problematised internet access as a right by questioning the economic implications:

when there's a right to something, well who's going to pay for that? Like are you going to get a free laptop too? . . . a lot of stuff has to happen for you to have free fast Internet or whatever. . . . I have the right to have it if I like to pay for it myself.

Tomas was conscious that internet access required capital in the form of material and economic resources. Whilst Alen argued that internet access was not a basic requirement to survive, Tomas constructed access to digital spaces as more than having internet access, access also required technological capital if individuals were to exploit that access. He drew upon individualised notions of citizenship and constructed the access and use of digitally-mediated spaces as an issue of personal responsibility, motivation and benefit (Humpage, 2008; Mossberger, Tolbert, et al., 2008b), rather than an issue of inequality or social good

(Mossberger, Tolbert, et al., 2008b; Oyedemi, 2012, 2015a; Servaes, 2003; United Nations Human Rights Council Resolution 32/L.20). He positioned internet access as the responsibility of the citizen rather than the nation-state.

Participants' divergent views on whether internet access was a right reflect the contradictory ways that citizenship is constructed by the nation-state (Humpage, 2008). The discourses of individual responsibility that have dominated in New Zealand since the 1980s responsabilise citizens and emphasise obligations to the nation-state, which is in tension with the nation-state's responsibilities (Humpage, 2008) to address social conditions that impede citizens from participating as informed citizens (Ministry of Education, 2007). These and other discourses, including constructions of individual rights and responsibilities, opportunity and risk, will have shaped how participants understood the right to access the internet.

#### **6.4.2 Discourses of opportunity and freedom**

Digital spaces provided a sense of freedom for these young people who had been frustrated at the mixed messages they received about their offline participation and citizenship practices (see Section 6.1.1). Digitally-mediated spaces were appealing because they seemed to offer more freedom from social expectations than 'offline' spaces. Some participants commented that digital spaces offered the opportunity to choose how they represented themselves online: "The differences [to offline] are you can pretty much be anyone you want to be online and you can make it how you want online" (Hadley, Kikorangi College). Digital spaces offered participants not only a sense of agency, but also a sense of control over their participation. Crafting a digital profile provides opportunities to "type oneself into being" (Sunden, 2003, p. 3) and craft a 'best self' (Boyle & Johnson, 2010; Morrison, 2010), but it may be difficult to maintain alternate identity performances online in the long-term as identity cues, such as speech patterns, leak through interactions (boyd, 2014). All the same, the young people in this study reported they found the freedom to play with their online identity performances empowering (S. T. Stern, 2007): "It doesn't have to be these boxes and people quite like that. You can kind of just be what you want" (Kate, Tertiary Group). Participants felt digitally-mediated spaces offered some freedom over their online identity performances because "there's no governing bodies, so there's no one to say, 'no that's not who you actually are'" (Kate, Tertiary Group).

Despite claims that there was no authority to contradict their online re-presentations, participants were aware of the way they re-presented themselves in digitally-mediated interrelational spaces to potential audiences and the way their interactions might be interpreted (boyd, 2014). For example, a few participants felt that joining a digitally-mediated community provided an opportunity, and even a right, to have a voice: “if I sign up to this website, then I have a voice on this website and it’s my choice as to how I’m going to use it” (Lily, Kikorangi College). Nonetheless, they recognised those rights were tempered by the responsibility to consider how they expressed themselves. Participants conveyed being aware of the ways their presentations might be (mis)interpreted by others because of the affordances of digitally-mediated spaces: “it’s a little bit harder when it’s in writing . . . because you’re taking away the gestures and body language and that sort of thing” (Roseanna, Tertiary Group). Without embodied gestures and cues, written conversations are open to misinterpretation (boyd, 2008; Sunden, 2003). As a result, participants reported managing their digital performances of habitus, including carefully considering what they said online: “it runs through my mind when I’m making a status as ‘if I wouldn’t say it out loud would I really say it online’” (Betty, Waiporoporo College). Discourses of opportunity to choose their online re-presentation were therefore tempered by discourses of risk that online performances may be mis-recognised.

### **6.4.3 Discourses of risk**

Parents, young people, and educators had internalised and re-produced discourses of risk with regard to participation in digital spaces. Often messages of risk and danger originated from stories in the media that parents and extended family took-up, reframed, and re-produced to young people: “it’s mostly the media, like your parents will see something on the news and they will exaggerate like ‘this kid saw this and did this’ . . . parents see that and take that as the truth” (Zach, Waiporoporo College). Participants were slightly dismissive of the way parents re-produced media constructions of risk with several participants claiming online risk was overestimated compared to offline risks. For instance, although Addison (Waiporoporo College) re-produced fears about the vulnerability of young girls in digitally-mediated spaces and the risk of predatory strangers, she constructed the perception of risk as exaggerated unless people engaged in risky behaviours:

Obviously it’s such a huge worry for a little girl to be on things like Facebook and Tumblr and stuff, you know, stranger danger, but I think you’re more

likely to get in danger in real-life than online . . . Unless you're trying to make a relationship with someone online who you've never met, I don't think it's that dangerous.

In doing so, Addison placed the responsibility on the individual to not engage in practices that might increase risk, but also canvassed the different affordances of the different spaces.

However, several participants reported negative media stories had directly contributed to their perception of digital spaces as risky: “you hear horror stories and that kind of makes you aware of the fact that you do sometimes have to be slightly careful” (Cloe, Tertiary Group). These participants tended to accept the responsabilisation of individuals to be careful, with risk being determined by the individual's practices. Nonetheless, although media stories fuel the moral panic over young people's use of digitally-mediated spaces, the majority of young people are not negatively impacted by negative online experiences (Díaz Andrade et al., 2018; Livingstone & Smith, 2014; Netsafe, 2018b).

Age and gender played a role in the way discourses of risk were constructed for young people. Risk for younger participants, especially if they were female, was often generalised as ‘stranger-danger’ and a fear of predators: “When I first started using [the internet] I was always told ‘be careful there are so many predators out there’” (Addison, Waiporoporo College). Several of the older female participants reported they continued to receive warnings from their parents who held fears about privacy and security: “I always get cut out articles from my Mum any time that Facebook comes up in the Sunday Star Times or something. And she's like ‘this is how you change all your security settings (laughs)’” (Kate, Tertiary Group). On the other hand, the messages male participants reported receiving from their parents were less about safety and more about avoiding particular practices: “they tell you what not to do, like don't go onto porn sites and that sort of stuff” (Antonio, Tertiary Group). Parents were reportedly also concerned over the future consequences of young people's actions: “[My parents] say don't post bad stuff or you'll get in trouble and you won't get employed when you're older” (Cheekie, Kikorangi College). Although discourses of risk were presented in different ways, parental concerns were often about protecting young people from perceived dangers.

While participants often dismissed and/or pushed back against parental fears, the discursive cues had an effect, with several conveying that they too had taken up and re-

produced discourses of risk for younger relatives. Jodie (Tertiary Group), for example, revealed she helped monitor her young sister's use of social media, in part due to fears about potential future consequences from her sister's digital practices: "I message her when anything bad comes on. I'm just like, 'you've got to take that off!' Because I just think that it is huge right now with employers, you can never know what is going to resurface". Jodie continued to receive similar warnings from her parents over her social media usage and had internalised concerns over long-term consequences of social media postings, such as the risk of an unwanted audience viewing her posts. Whilst social media sites usually offer tools to protect the privacy and visibility of content, these fears represent a lack of trust in social media companies to protect privacy.

Like parents, schools contributed to discursive constructions of digitally-mediated interactions as risky. Often the school's focus was upon preventing cyberbullying and negative behaviours: "at school it was pretty much just cyber-bullying sort of thing and just treating people nicely online" (Nikolai, Community Group). Participants reported that schools routinely out-sourced risk-prevention approaches to visiting speakers, who would lecture students at school assemblies on behavioural topics such as cybersafety and cyberbullying: "there's this fella who comes down from [City] and he gives us the whole bullying talk, but I don't think anyone really listens to it" (Molly, Kikorangi College). Many were disparaging about the guidelines around digital practices that visiting speakers prescribed which were deemed irrelevant to the ways participants used digital technologies. Betty (Waiporoporo College), for instance, provided more detail about the 'rules' a visiting speaker had suggested regarding the use of social media:

they had like very silly ones (laughs) like, 'you need to make sure that your parent knows everything that you're writing online' (laughs) and 'you should only be online between these times', 'never do it at school'. . . . And it was very like 'pffff' . . . so, I think after hearing the "rules" (air quotes) everyone just sort of like chucked it to the side.

Like many participants, Betty was dismissive of suggestions to curtail her digital practices. She found laughable the suggestion to invite parental oversight and monitoring of her online use. Inviting parents into their digitally-mediated interrelational spaces would have run counter to the way participants had constructed digital spaces as offering freedom from

control and oversight. Betty constructed the ‘rules’ provided by the speaker as guidelines that could be, and were, ignored.

Messages to restrict digital practices and interactions emphasise the individual’s responsibility to adapt their practices even when that may restrict their ability to use digitally-mediated spaces (McCosker, 2016). For instance, being told to avoid social media during school hours ignores the way social media is appropriated for use in the classroom (Chawinga, 2017; W. Clark et al., 2009; Greenhow, 2011; Greenhow & Robelia, 2009a, 2009b; Grosseck, Bran, & Tiru, 2011; Hew, 2011; Poore, 2016). Indeed, some students reported their school authorities used social media for organising school events: “the [school trip] thing, like all of the organisation meetings and stuff is all on Facebook” (Ziva, Waiporoporo College). There is a tension, or “digital dissonance”, created when ‘everyday’ use of digital technologies is delegitimised through the imposition of constraints around practices (W. Clark et al., 2009, p. 57). For young people, rules inspired by discourses of risk may therefore seem irrelevant especially if the focus upon cybersafety practices does not fit with their lived experiences and ways of using digital technologies (Third & Collin, 2016). Nonetheless, such messages reinforce discourses of risk as well as constructing online as a space where young people need guidance, monitoring and protection.

#### **6.4.4 Discourses of control**

Discourses of risk inspired attempts by educators to assert some control. Age and context played a role with participants recalling more restrictions when they were younger. For those at tertiary institutions, there were still some restrictions around internet usage, although participants were vague about what digital practices those limits curtailed: “just the adult content, I think. I can’t remember . . . maybe it was the gaming thing . . . a specific site or something?” (Jodie, Tertiary Group). Meanwhile, most participants reported schools constructed digital practices in terms of appropriate behaviours as a way to address perceptions of risk. For many, this had taken the form of being asked to agree to stipulations about acceptable use of school internet and technology resources: “We had to sign some agreement saying that you’re not going to send anything graphic like pornography or use anything like that” (Adriano, Community Group). However, these requirements were met with some cynicism by at least one participant: “it’s to stop you from looking at things you shouldn’t be looking at, but it’s also so they don’t get into trouble for you looking at something on their servers” (Steve, Community Group). Schools’ attempts to control

behaviours was understood as risk avoidance on the school's behalf, as much as it was about avoiding risk for students.

Schools further attempted to shape appropriate behaviours and exert control by limiting access to or monitoring interrelational spaces. Multiple participants reported that their schools had restricted or denied access to some websites, especially social media sites. Some described these restrictions as beneficial, protecting them from 'inappropriately' wasting time on social media:

for about 3 months . . . you could just access everything. None of us were getting any of our work done. And then once Watchdog came, all the younger kids went 'oh now we can't go on Facebook' [whine] and all my year went 'yes! We can't go on Facebook. It's good. We're not distracted, and we can get our work done' . . . But my friends can [access Facebook] if they've got data or something on their phones (Lily, Kikorangi College).

These students re-produced discourses that constructed young people as unable to control their use of social media and digitally-mediated spaces, meaning that unfettered access to the internet was risky and problematic. As a result, some participants welcomed restrictions put in place by the school. Nonetheless, the school's attempts at limiting use were circumventable given adequate digital and economic capital, such as being able to purchase data for cell phones.

Participants were aware that their use of digital spaces could be monitored by school authorities. In particular, Waiporoporo College students reported that the school had threatened that access may be restricted as a way to control behaviours: "our teachers can see everything we're looking at in class . . . they can physically close our internet if we're not doing our work" (Dave, Waiporoporo College). Educational uses of digitally-mediated spaces were positioned as superior to social use, although participants did not always agree with teacher judgments regarding whether interactions were 'work' or 'social':

[in a classroom] you'll be talking to someone right next to you, like 'how do I do this', whereas if you go on a computer, you message, like what's the difference between doing that in class and doing that on Facebook? (Zach, Waiporoporo College).

Participants were frustrated at the way teachers delegitimised their interactions in digitally-mediated spaces when only the medium of communication had changed. They pushed back against distrust and assumptions around their digital practices and restrictions that aimed to control their digital practices (Vivienne et al., 2016).

Students at Waiporoporo College had also been warned that their privacy may be invaded if wrongdoing was suspected:

Recently at our assembly we were told that if we are believed to be cyber bullying then they actually are allowed to go through our phones to check. . . I think they just take it and look which I don't personally agree with, but I do see where they're coming from on cyberbullying and stuff.

Although Addison was uncomfortable with the school's potential surveillance of student cell phones, she was arguably powerless to actively resist the school's threat to control her interrelational spaces. Attempted surveillance of private spaces by adults is often seen as evidence of distrust (S. T. Stern, 2007) and reinforces power hierarchies. The school's threats constructed young people and their digital practices as untrustworthy and reinforced discourses of young people's actions as problematic (Beals & Wood, 2012; Lincoln, 2012; Messias, et al., 2007; Valentine et al., 1998). Threatened monitoring of young people's digital technology use reinforces constructions of young people as needing to be taught appropriate behaviours, and their use of digital spaces as problematic and needing to be controlled.

Control and surveillance of young people's use of digitally-mediated spaces was also common in their 'private' home spaces and served to construct young people as vulnerable in 'risky' digital spaces. Many of the participants described how, like schools, parents responded to perceptions of risk by attempting to monitor and control their access to digitally-mediated spaces when they were younger: "when I went online, I was in my parents' study on their main desktop computer . . . they could come in anytime" (Zoey, Tertiary Group). Similarly, parents had often restricted access to websites that were considered unsafe: "[Mum] got her friend to block certain websites so that I could only go on websites that were safe for me" (Jill, Community Group). When younger, the threat of having interactions monitored was also present: "my mum used to know all our Facebook passwords and stuff so that she could monitor it" (Hadley, Kikorangi College). These participants took for granted that parents would attempt to control and monitor their actions



when younger. In doing so, they re-produced constructions of young people as less competent, in a state of becoming (Lister, 2007c; Prout & James, 2015; Valentine et al., 1998), and whose practices were untrustworthy.

Surveillance and monitoring of digital practices did not just come from parental or educational authorities. Participants raised issues of surveillance and re-produced discourses of citizens as subject to the authority of the nation-state, including in digitally-mediated spaces. Many participants appeared nonchalant about being monitored in digital spaces. They assumed their digital data and practices were already under surveillance but were unconcerned about the way their digital practices might be judged: “your Internet provider can give information to the government if you’re doing something that’s a bit objectionable. . . . [but] the government’s not too bothered about the odd movie or the odd song” (Dave, Waiporoporo College). Indeed, some constructed surveillance by the nation-state as potentially beneficial:

I have nothing to hide so I’m all good . . . sometimes it’s good because if the government is looking at us, they can see the things that we like so they can do something good with it. So, there is a positive way to think about it. (Lily, Kikorangi College).

These participants were comfortable with their digital practices. Despite recent constructions in the media regarding risks to privacy and security from state surveillance, these participants re-produced counter-discourses that constructed surveillance as only risky if they engaged in digital practices that the nation-state considered a risk.

Some participants, however, were less comfortable about surveillance of their digital practices by the nation-state. Chairan (Kikorangi College) presented an extreme view in which he equated surveillance in digital spaces to ‘stalking’, an emotionally-laden term that hinted at the risk of the unwanted gaze: “I wouldn’t like it if someone stalked me and that’s pretty much what they’re doing, they’re stalking you (laughs) . . . I don’t want people to know who I know and stuff” (Chairan, Kikorangi College). Chairan was conscious of his privacy and digital security. However, he was uncomfortable at the implication that his control of his interrelational spaces, personal information, and audience, may be threatened. Rather than viewing state surveillance as neutral or beneficial, Chairan constructed surveillance of his digital spaces as potential risk. Ironically, young people are told to protect their privacy, even whilst that privacy is threatened by surveillance from authorities such as

parents, schools, and the nation-state who may monitor digitally-mediated interrelational spaces.

#### **6.4.5 Discourses of competence**

As well as discourses of risk and control, assumptions about young people's use of digitally-mediated spaces are shaped by discourses of competence. The young people in this study highlighted how generational and gendered discourses of competence shaped their understanding of their digital practices. For instance, even while parents and schools discursively constructed young people as vulnerable, requiring protection and oversight, several participants complained that their parents assumed they had superior technological skills because of their age:

we're just the try and see if it works kind of era, so people assume that we know a lot. And my mum is the same. . . . I think that people think that is competence, like she definitely thinks I'm competent and I'm like 'no I'm just trying'. She's like 'show me how you do it' and I'm like 'well I have to figure out how to do it first and then I can show you' (Kate, Tertiary Group).

Kate argued that her skills came from a willingness to try, rather than innate affinity. She framed her presumed competence using digital technologies in terms of generational attitudes, rather than skills. A common myth is that young people have an innate affinity for technology as 'digital natives' (Ohler, 2010; Prensky, 2010). However, these young people rejected suggestions they were more competent than their parents due to their age. Instead, they constructed digital capital as practices driven by an enquiring habitus. It should be noted, however, that while some participants felt more comfortable using technology than their older relatives, some participants did not.

Among the participants, a small group of female participants stood out as reinforcing gendered discourses of digital competence. Several of the young women in the Tertiary group flatted together and they laughingly described how they relied heavily on a nearby group of their male friends for technical support:

We rely on the boys [flat next door] far too much for that sort of thing, because they just know everything that there is to know. . . . They all are just naturally kind of, like they play video games and stuff, so they are all up on that kind of stuff. . . . If you have someone who knows how to do it you don't

learn yourself because it's easier to just go 'oh could you do this for me'  
(laughs) (Jodie, Tertiary Group).

These participants tended to use digital technologies primarily for education and entertainment purposes. They described their male peers as providing support with a range of issues, including internet connection problems or issues with specific programs. In relying on their male friends, these young women upheld discourses of computing and technical expertise as a male domain (Vekiri, 2013; Vekiri & Chronaki, 2008; Wong & Kemp, 2018). Furthermore, they re-produced constructions of digital capital as being innate and 'natural', (Prensky, 2010) to men. The support of their male peers meant they had internalised gendered discourses of male competence and had not necessarily developed their own digital capital through participation.

## 6.5 Summary

Young people are learning to make sense of their (digital) citizenship amid a murky world of competing discourses. The young people in this study were subject to multiple, at times contradictory, discursive constructions of how to be and do (digital) citizen(ship). Citizenship and norms of citizenship practices are constructs often defined by others, and digital citizenship is no different. Participants reported a myriad of discourses shared by parent, educators, media, and peers that shaped their citizenship practices offline and online. They felt frustrated at discourses that created expectations of their (digital) citizenship habitus and practices yet were at odds with discourses that positioned them as 'becoming' citizens needing protection and oversight. For these young people, (digital) citizenship was constructed as participatory habitus and practices, although some participants resisted the notion that participation be considered compulsory and countered with a need for more inclusive understandings of everyday lived citizenship. Participants therefore not only re-produced discourses but sought to shape discourses through their own meaning-making.

Digital spaces added another layer of discursive complexity to understandings of citizenship. Discourses around young people intersected with discourses of digital spaces to shape expectations of young people's digital practices. Participants re-produced (digital) citizenship as conferring expectations of rights and responsibilities that would shape practices across offline and online spaces. These young people felt they were expected to participate in digitally-mediated spaces and constructed access to the internet as essential

for everyday participation in society, including education, employment, and accessing services and resources. However, there was disagreement among participants as to whether this was enough to construct internet access as a right, with concerns raised as to who would fund the provision of digital access.

Competing discourses of opportunity and risk were compounded by discourses of competence. Participants re-produced digital spaces as spaces of opportunity in terms of access to education, employment, and added opportunities that were meaningful for their lives, such as the apparent freedom to choose their online representation. Yet these opportunities were countered by the risk that online performances may be misinterpreted and/or monitored by others.

'Others', such as parents, educators, and the media, were key sources of competing discourses. Through attempts to monitor, control, and shape 'appropriate' behaviours, parents and schools constructed digitally-mediated spaces as risky spaces, even while still promoting digitally-mediated spaces as necessary for educational purposes. Even as young people's practices in digitally-mediated spaces were constructed as problematic and untrustworthy, and their habitus constructed as vulnerable and less competent, young people were responsabilised and expected to adapt their practices to address risk in ways that often limited opportunities to participate. Furthermore, threats to monitor and control young people's practices potentially contributed to some participants' understandings of digitally-mediated spaces as risky.

Throughout this chapter, participants fluidly shifted between competing discursive constructions that shaped the way they embodied their (digital) citizen habitus through discursive practices, for example balancing expectations of rights and agency against the responsibility to uphold social norms. Weedon (1987) reminds us that habitus is a way of being that shapes the way discourses are embodied through practices. As these young people drew upon, made sense of, then re-produced, or resisted, various discursive constructions of citizenship, they re-produced what it meant to them to be young (digital) citizens of New Zealand.

In the next chapter, I move to explore the way young people began to make sense of the relational aspects of their (digital) citizenship in terms of belongingness and connectedness to places and spaces.

## **Chapter 7: Locating (Digital) Citizen Habitus in Place and Space**

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Calhoun reminds us that “it is impossible not to belong to social groups, relations or culture” (Calhoun, 2003, p. 536). As (digital) citizens, young people are connected with, and belong to, multiple communities across multiple places and spaces. In this third findings chapter, I focus on how young people make sense of (digital) citizenship as located in place and space through notions of belonging and connectedness.

I argued in the previous findings chapters that discourses are implicit in sanctioned definitions of (digital) citizenship, and in the way others construct digital technologies and digitally-mediated spaces. I have outlined the ways these young people understood and reproduced discursive constructions of digital technologies and (digital) citizenship in ways that reflect and shape habitus. How people make sense of their relational connections to communities and their sense of belonging is important because, in the context of (digital) citizenship, it reflects the way individuals share an understanding of what it means to be and do (digital) citizen. Belonging not only shapes (digital) citizen habitus, it reflects the way individuals understand their individual habitus as aligning with societal habitus through performative practices.

I continue, in this chapter, to theorise (digital) citizenship as performative and an enactment of habitus through practices that transcend material and digitally-mediated interrelational spaces (see Chapter 2). To that end, I continue to move between using ‘citizenship’ to denote performances of citizenship in material spaces, ‘digital citizenship’ to denote performances specific to digitally-mediated spaces, and (digital) citizenship to reflect how digital citizenship transmediates across spaces. Additionally, I draw further upon notions of belonging and concepts of place/space. To reiterate, citizenship can be understood as a formalised statement of belonging to place/space (Fenster, 2007). In speaking of place and space, I understand place as a site of socio-cultural location, a destination imbued with historical meaning and values, and I understand space as the ongoing product of interactions between agents within interrelational spaces (Massey, 2005). With that understanding, websites may act as digitally-mediated places that locate interrelational spaces.

Like the previous chapters, this chapter is presented in sections. In Section 7.1, I analyse the ways the participants constructed citizenship as a formalised, legal status made

visible through symbolic capital. In Section 7.2, I explore the ways these young people understood their (digital) citizenship in terms of connecting and belonging to places and spaces. I conclude (Section 7.3) by arguing that how young people locate themselves as (digital) citizens is shaped through feelings of connectedness and belongingness, along with discursive meaning-making.

## **7.1 Formalised Citizenship: The “Formal Structures of Belonging”**

(Digital) citizens inhabit discursively constructed spaces. As the previous chapter argued, discourses shape constructions of digital technologies and their use, and construct particular performances of (digital) citizen habitus as more acceptable than others (Horton & Kraftl, 2013). Discourses shape spaces of belonging and underpin concepts of citizenship (Fenster, 2007). Discourses about citizenship give meaning to lived experiences and define who is included and excluded from membership of a community (Fenster, 2007; Kivisto & Faist, 2015; Yuval-Davis, 2007, 2011, 2016). Citizenship can be understood, therefore, as the discursively constructed expression of belonging. In that vein, citizenship represents the expression of “formal structures of belonging” (Fenster, 2007, p. 244) that construct citizens within normative frameworks of inclusion and/or exclusion. Formal status makes belonging visible. How that eventuates in offline and online spaces varies.

### **7.1.1 ‘Offline’: “It’s just a status”**

Overwhelmingly, participants recognised that citizenship involves relationships to places and spaces. For instance, all 28 of the participants reflected the dominant construction of ‘citizenship’ as an individualistic formal legal status that makes visible a connection to place. For many, belonging to place was formed through birth-right: “to be a citizen of New Zealand... yeah just having been born in New Zealand and having something to belong to. As in, this is my country; this is where I come from” (Rachel, Tertiary Group). Rachel’s view was typical of those who felt “being born in New Zealand” provided a sense of belonging. Rachel evoked belonging to place as a component of a citizen identity. Place, such as the place of birth, held meaning and value for participants, providing an anchor for their citizenship identity and their sense of belongingness (Antonsich, 2010; Fenster, 2007; T. Hall, Coffey, & Williamson, 1999). Although the value of citizenship varied for participants, claiming connection to place served to locate their citizenship and symbolise their inclusion as a member of a national community (Yuval-Davis, 2011).

All of the participants recognised formal status was made visible through the possession of legal documents which symbolise the formal relationship between citizen and nation-state:

I think definitely the first thing would be like your passport or some kind of form that says you are definitely from New Zealand. . . . first and foremost, like ranking, it would definitely be passport but then the community-wise things like school and [organisation] and just the things I've been involved in that prove that I've been here for a while (Betty, Waiporoporo College).

Like most participants, Betty linked her citizenship to place through documentation that indicates membership of the nation-state, but also reinforced her claim to status through practices that show a connection over time to place-based communities. Participants recognised that legal documents, such as passports and birth certificates, symbolise the individual's legal status and signify recognition by the nation-state of the citizen. To possess the formal certification of citizenship is to possess both cultural and symbolic capital that ensures one is seen to be a citizen, and thus is entitled to make rights claims and receive the benefits of citizenship (Isin & Nielson, 2013b; Webb et al., 2002). Legal documents are symbolic capitals that act as discursive cues indicating a citizen's relationship to the nation-state.

Many participants were aware that the legal status of citizenship could be granted by the nation-state to those not associated by birthplace. Most felt that citizenship status could also take into account the 'citizen's' participatory practices when granting legal citizenship. For example, Hadley (Kikorangi College) initially claimed there should be no requirements for citizenship, but then went on to argue that citizenship should be awarded if the citizen shows evidence of participatory practices over time:

I don't think you really have to do anything. I don't think you should have to. . . . If you stay there long enough then they should like, just, give you one . . . like, they'd ask you questions and stuff, and you'd like, show the things that you've done for the place that you want to stay in.

Hadley felt that status could be earned through doing citizenship practices contributing to a particular nation-state. Participants drew upon concepts of citizenship as a process encompassing many activities (Asen, 2004) and involving the doing of citizenship practices. These participants argued that the nation-state should recognise the participatory habitus of

would-be citizens as shown through their practices and grant a formal status of citizenship based upon relationship to place/space over time.

For almost half of the participants, however, legal status and the relationship to nation-state was a passive technicality, with no expectation of participation despite the implication of doing practices inherent in the enacting of rights and responsibilities. These predominantly older participants troubled constructions of formal citizenship status and what that implied about a citizen's relationship to nation-state. For instance, Zoey's (Tertiary Group) view reflected the ways some participants constructed legal citizenship as merely a passive status that required little action on the part of citizens and thus lacked depth:

it's just a status. I don't think it holds much, like, depth behind it. It's just a citizen; it's just what everyone else is. It's not, like, you don't have to accomplish much to get it. It's just there. You're born there, your family's from there, and you're a citizen.

For these participants, the legal status of 'citizen' was not unique or special as "it's just what everyone else is". However, Hadley felt connection to place and doing citizenship practices should earn citizenship status, while Zoey felt citizenship status was given without being earned. Zoey's family had spent some time overseas before moving back to New Zealand when she was an adolescent. Although she was legally a citizen, Zoey was adamant in the interview that she did not feel a sense of belonging to New Zealand as place based upon her legal status. As "just a status" that requires little or no action by the citizen, Zoey constructed and re-presented formal, legal citizenship status as passive and less worthy. In her opinion, citizens who are connected to place by birth do not have to "accomplish much" to retain the privilege of legal citizenship status. Nonetheless, Zoey acknowledged that a status connected to place may be reinforced through relational connections such as family. In noting the relationship between legal status and birth-place, participants acknowledged the role of the nation-state and place in determining citizenship status and therefore determining who belongs and who is excluded from belonging.

The nation-state's role in prescribing formal criteria for inclusion and exclusion was referenced by some participants who felt that citizenship was an unavoidable requirement incorporating participatory actions and imposed by the nation-state. For instance, Tomas (Tertiary Group) constructed citizenship itself as "a construct", a requirement that did not necessitate an affective response from the individual citizen:



I feel like it's like a construct. So, I don't know, it's not something that I feel like a citizen because I do this. But it's just like the government or whoever is formed by like, requirements. So, like registering to vote and like having a passport and being able to apply for a passport.

Although Tomas constructed citizenship status requirements as participatory, he appeared to reject the notion that his sense of connectedness and belonging as citizen was formed through doing these requirements. Instead, Tomas understood citizenship as spatial, formed through a political state's expectations of a citizen. Tomas' description of citizenship as "a construct" reflected his awareness of the socially-constructed acceptance of the nation-state's role in the citizenship relationship.

One participant offered a unique construction of the formal citizenship relationship between nation-state and citizen. Like others, Adriano (Community Group) constructed his formal citizenship as an unavoidable technicality linked to place and space, yet he also drew upon more nuanced discursive constructions of the nation-state's role:

the majority of the world we're all citizens somewhere you live, like it's a technicality. It's not a big pride in kiwiana sort of thing. It's just I have to belong to some government. You know, some government mothers me and it happens to be I'm in New Zealand, so it's New Zealand's [government] . . . the government system that's already there, it's there to look after the people and there should be more focus on that.

Adriano located the citizen/nation-state relationship in place, but claimed the location was a technicality. While place may determine 'which' nation-state the citizen is formally recognised by, it does not change the necessity to be a citizen of "somewhere". Interestingly, Adriano linked citizenship to "somewhere you live", although being a citizen of place is not required to live and be a denizen or inhabitant in place/space.

Adriano was not the only participant to refer to the nation-state taking care of citizens, but he was the only participant to construct citizenship in terms of a maternal or 'asen

' relationship between citizen and nation-state. He discursively constructed the nation-state as protecting, caring, and being responsible for its citizens, and positioned himself as subject to that relationship. For Adriano, citizenship as formal status is based in

place and enacted through practices in the interrelational spaces of the state-citizen relationship. Mothers are often seen as representing the collective identity, the homeland, as well as a sense of embedded “networks of belonging” (Yuval-Davis, 2011, p. 95). Through his use of the term ‘mothers me’, I read Adriano as claiming the right to be cared for as a citizen. In doing so, Adriano recognised the obligations placed on the nation-state towards citizens and a sense of the emotionality that may form through that relationship, even when that relationship is formed through “a technicality”.

Formal citizenship is about being recognised by the nation-state as belonging to a geo-political community. Constructing citizenship as formal or legal status is about recognising the relationship between citizen and nation-state. It is a relationship associated with rights and responsibilities and, for these participants, discourses of participation. Made visible through symbolic capitals such as documentation, legal citizenship is a form of symbolic capital that reflects a formal relationship with the nation-state and formalises belonging to place and space (Fenster, 2007).

### **7.1.2 ‘Online’: “It’s me, it’s identified as me”**

The same formal relationship to the nation-state does not necessarily exist in digitally-mediated spaces. None of the participants identified ‘digital citizenship’ as having a formal or ‘legal’ status. However, around a third of participants constructed ‘digital citizenship’ in terms of the visible ‘status’, or digital footprint, that is created by joining online communities. This group of young people argued that being seen to be present in a digitally-mediated space indicated their status as digital citizen. For instance, Alen (Tertiary Group) was one of several participants who referred to signing up to websites as creating a digital citizen status: “if you’re making accounts with a particular website you will be a digital citizen of that particular website . . . registering, giving them your details”. Alen implied that if an individual provides their details to open an account and is accepted by the website, then they have a formalised status as a digital citizen. What is more, unlike the passive technicality status of ‘citizen-by-birth’, Alen recognised that to achieve digital citizen status ‘by presence’ required some action by the individual, such as registering and providing details to identify with the website. These participants recognised that, in the same way that documentation acts as a discursive cue for formal status, a visible digital presence acts as a discursive cue indicating digital citizenship status and making visible connections to digitally-mediated places and spaces.

Participants noted that digital accounts create a digital citizenship presence and serve to link the digitally-mediated citizen persona with the material citizen persona. However, maintaining control over symbolic re-presentations was not always easy for some participants. For instance, Rachel (Tertiary Group) summed up her digital citizenship as presence: “my Facebook account and my bank account and all this sort of stuff. Like, it’s *mine*. . . . it’s *me*, it’s identified as me” [original emphasis]. Rachel was at pains to claim ownership and control over the digitally-mediated re-presentations of her identity. This view may have been reinforced by recent events where she had lost control of her Facebook account her friends had changed her profile name as a prank: “my Facebook was just logged on and they just thought they’d be funny (laughs). And it was funny, until I realised, I couldn’t change it back”. Rachel found that the original creation of her account was easier than regaining control of her re-presentation: “when I first did it, I could just create the account without giving my passport or anything, and then when my name changed all of a sudden they were like, ‘Well, how can you prove it?’”. Digital accounts re-present the citizen identity, linking the ‘offline’ and ‘online’ citizen identities. For Rachel, her banking and social media accounts were the symbolic capital that showed her digital citizen status and identified her in digitally-mediated spaces. Her friends’ actions threatened that status by breaking the connection between her ‘offline’ and ‘online’ identities. In the same way that nation-states have the authority and ability to control who is included or excluded from ‘legal’ citizen status in material spaces, websites or other authorities may seek to control digital presence, and therefore who is included or excluded, in digitally-mediated spaces.

Sometimes individuals do not have control over being connected to particular digital spaces. One participant, Chairan (Kikorangi College), claimed that he had at times been involuntarily ‘pulled’ into digitally-mediated spaces by the actions of others, such as school authorities: “when I go to school, they automatically create a Gmail account or an email account for me and therefore I’m automatically pulled in”. Here Chairan described the way that a form of digital citizenship may be constructed for the individual rather than by the individual. No other participants mentioned being co-opted into digitally-mediated ‘places’ through the involuntary creation of a digital footprint. In the same way formal citizenship status was earlier constructed as passive by Zoey and other participants (see Section 7.1.1), Chairan highlighted how citizens may be passively located by authority figures in digital spaces that they did not choose.

Choosing to have a digital presence necessitates being able to access and participate in digital spaces, but most of the participants reiterated that access was not always easy. Participants from all groups referred to not always having internet access at their homes, or even via cell phone data:

There's a few people that can't get internet access, but not a lot, like at the moment I can't get internet access at home . . . but most people have Wi-Fi nowadays, and if they can't get Wi-Fi at home they can get it at Maccas<sup>11</sup> or BK<sup>12</sup> or something (Molly, Kikorangi College).

Many of the participants mentioned accessing the internet via publicly available Wi-Fi spots such as fast-food restaurants, libraries, or educational institutions. As a result, most participants felt that access to the internet was available in some form even if the ability to participate was limited: "Like you can't get involved to as much of an extent, but everyone can probably kinda access it somehow" (Cloe, Tertiary Group). While relying on free Wi-Fi spots may impact participation, as Cloe argues, these strategies showed agency on the part of these young people in overcoming the limitations they experienced accessing the internet.

Notably, participants also constructed 'access' as including access to digital technologies, such as a computer or smartphone, which appeared to be almost taken for granted by participants: "most people have a cell phone, or they have a neighbour who has something, so I'm not saying everyone's a digital citizen, but there's more people who are than aren't" (Lily, Kikorangi College). Lily's comment highlights the way cell phones are considered ubiquitous in society. At the time of the interviews, over two thirds of New Zealanders had a smartphone (Research NZ, 2015). However, while the ability to access digitally-mediated spaces is key to a concept of digital citizenship (Mossberger, Tolbert, et al., 2008b), the ability to utilise that access to engage in digital citizenship practices is also important.

Along with the ability to access digitally-mediated spaces, participants recognised that digital skills played a role in developing a digital presence as a digital citizen. All but

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<sup>11</sup> MacDonalds Restaurant

<sup>12</sup> Burger King Restaurant

one of the young people in this study mentioned skills as a component of digital citizenship, but most referred to the way varying digital skills shaped participatory practices rather than considering digital skills as a form of access. Nonetheless, some participants recognised varying levels of competence may affect digital presence and status as a digital citizen. For example, several participants reiterated discursive constructions around generational differences in digital competence (Ohler, 2010; Prensky, 2010; Selwyn, 2009a). Dave and Zach (Waiporoporo College), who were interviewed together, offered an indicative example as they laughingly discussed what they felt were their parents' and grandparents' struggles using digital technologies:

Dave: yeah, Dad's still "how do I do this on the internet" (laughs).

Zach: It's almost like another language in a way as well, 'cause my grandparents don't understand it at all (laughs). They're always needing help just to change like, just the volume and stuff (laughs).

Dave and Zach appeared to find it humorous that older relatives struggled with aspects of technology use that they personally found unproblematic. While Dave and Zach's experiences point to their older relatives perhaps finding it more difficult to participate in digitally-mediated spaces, their relatives nonetheless had access to digital technologies and the internet. Furthermore, while parents' and grandparents' access was aided by their young relatives, they had access and digital capital in their own rights, even if limited.

However, one participant, Jodie (Tertiary Group), felt that differences in digital access were about motivation and attitude as much as competence. Jodie constructed digital access as practices arising from a dispositional way of being, or habitus, that motivated individuals to access digitally-mediated spaces and develop digital capital or skills. She constructed generational differences in digital capital as being due to a difference in habitus. In her opinion, older people were not only less digitally competent, but also less interested in accessing digitally-mediated spaces: "there's probably a whole generation like my grandparents who really struggle with that kind of stuff, but then they don't really want to [go online] anyway". Motivation aside, if people's skill levels prevent them from fully accessing and utilising digital technologies, then their digital presence and potential status as digital citizens are likely to be affected. Digital access is more than having access to the economic capital of devices, it also includes having the knowledge, motivation, and skills to

utilise technology to access and participate in digitally-mediated spaces (Mossberger, Tolbert, et al., 2008b).

## **7.2 Connecting and Belonging to Places and Spaces**

At its heart, (digital) citizenship is about belonging (Ohler, 2010). Belonging is about feeling connected to community and being recognised by others as having connections to a community (May, 2011). Belonging reflects the affective influence on (digital) citizen positions and practices. A sense of belonging represents the individual's meaning-making of their subject position as citizen (Reitsamer & Zobl, 2014). Belonging and making sense of experiences is a subjective process that fuels feelings of inclusion or exclusion (Brah, 1996). As such, belonging is shaped through understandings of the norms of citizenship and place and space (Yuval-Davis, 2006, 2011).

Furthermore, habitus and belonging are interrelated (May, 2011). A sense of belonging reflects congruence between an individual's habitus and the shared, collective habitus of a community. Belonging reflects the way individual dispositions align with the shared dispositions of those who share common social conditions (Burke, 2016; Maton, 2012) and engage in "collective and interrelated practices" (Burke et al., 2013, p. 166). In turn, this congruence provides a sense of safety and feeling 'at home' in place and space (Yuval-Davis, 2006, 2011).

In talking about what it means to be a (digital) citizen, all of the participants referenced notions of belonging and connectedness. However, their understanding of how belonging and connectedness played a role in (digital) citizenship varied, as did their understanding of the relationship of belonging to place and space.

### **7.2.1 Belonging to places: "A home" and/or "a geographical thing"?**

Around two-thirds of the participants talked about belonging in relation to 'offline' places. Nonetheless, the role of place in supporting connections and fostering a sense of belonging was disputed, with some feeling place was important, while others felt place was irrelevant. Central to notions of place and belonging was the way place often evoked an emotional reaction in those who evinced a sense of belonging and connectedness to place.

Place anchored citizenship through affective responses and a sense of place-belongingness (Antonsich, 2010). For a quarter of the participants, citizenship included belonging to a place where they felt at home, comfortable and safe. For instance, Hadley's (Kikorangi College) description illustrated the way these young people constructed citizenship through an affective response of belonging to 'home': "citizenship would be like just belonging to a place . . . the sense of belonging really . . . having a home, like a place that you're comfortable in". For a few participants, the sense of 'home' contributed to their feelings of comfort and safety: "it's just like the feeling like I belong and feeling safe and feeling like I want to live in New Zealand" (Tomas, Tertiary Group). Home is often constructed as the place where you can feel 'comfortable', 'safe', and 'want to live' (Ahmed, 2000; Yuval-Davis, 2006). Feeling at 'home' and a sense of place-belongingness reflects an emotional reaction, a feeling that individual habitus aligns with the habitus associated with place/space. When the internalised dispositions and individual way of being is similar to the expected ways of being of the community associated with place and space, the individual has internalised the norms of the field (Maton, 2012) and feels like "a fish in water" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 127).

Often participants described their place-belongingness as constructed through nostalgic memories. Jodie's (Tertiary Group) statement was typical of the way participants constructed place and belonging as shaped by memories and experiences: "I feel a huge connection to [town] because it's where all my childhood memories are". As place, 'home' is a term that holds emotional connotations and intimations of belonging and familiarity. Home is the subjective experience of place, "the lived experience of a locality" (Brah, 1996, p. 196) and the memory of those experiences (Ahmed, 2000). 'Home' provides significance to place and belonging by locating autobiographical factors such as memories. It represents the individual's meaning-making of their affective response and attachment to place (Ahmed, 2000; Antonsich, 2010).

One participant proffered the view that belonging is always about place. Kate (Tertiary Group) mused that it was hard to separate communities and spaces of social connections from place:

I'm trying to think of something that is not attached to a place, but it's really hard. . . . I've got a lot of friends that I met through [sports] that are all around the country . . . But that still comes back to the same place where we went on

tournament together and so it's like, whenever I think about them, I think about the place . . . from my experience in life so far everything has been about a place.

For Kate, the meaning of spaces was formed in, and connected to, places. Place allowed Kate to locate her experiences and relationships. She associated places with her lived experiences and imbued them with nostalgic meaning that strengthened her sense of connection and place-belongingness (Antonsich, 2010; Benson & Jackson, 2012).

Some participants, however, felt place was incidental to belongingness. They rejected place as little more than a “geographical thing” that situated their communities of practice. For instance, Nikolai (Community Group) was one of those who argued that belonging and a sense of being citizen was based in the interrelational spaces of community rather than in geographical place: “you’re a citizen of a local area, or a club, or a group, or an interest, or a hobby, and it just happens that it’s a geographical thing”. For this small group of participants, place was a technicality that located communities of belonging and interrelational spaces (Yuval-Davis, 2011). Belonging was more about community and people, than the geographic location.

### **7.2.2 Belongingness and spaces: “The people would be the massive part”**

Participants referred to a sense of belonging and connectedness that arose from connections to communities and implicitly, community members. For some, belongingness to community symbolised connections over time. For instance, Chairan (Kikorangi College) constructed his citizenship of an organisation as having been forged through his long-term connection to the group: “I belong to [organisation] because I’m getting [a leadership award] at the end of the year . . . I’d consider that I’m a citizen of it because I’ve been in there for quite a long time”. Chairan was heavily involved in the organisation and had received various awards based on participation. For Chairan, awards served as symbolic capital indicating his citizenship. Awards signified recognition by his community of his belonging and that his practices reflected those valued by the community. Over time, as individuals make sense of their everyday practices and develop connections to community members, their experiences lead to a sense of familiarity and belonging (Fenster, 2007; May, 2011). Chairan’s sense of belonging and feeling comfortable in the organisation was likely informed by congruence between his habitus and the community’s shared habitus and his familiarity with the expected way of being in his chosen organisation.



At the heart of belonging is relationships with others. As participants discussed their sense of belonging and connectedness, they could not help but refer to others in their communities. For instance, talking about why her sports club felt like a community, Jodie (Tertiary Group) felt the community feeling came from the people involved: “the people would be the massive part. Without the people running it and stuff, without them it wouldn't feel like... like it takes their personalities to give it that community feel”. For Jodie, and for others, community was relational. May (2011) reminds us that belonging “necessarily involves other people” (p. 370). It arises from the performance of shared practices within a group (Leach, 2002). When Jodie referred to group members’ personalities as shaping community, she referenced how individual ways of being shape the shared practices that become normalised for that community. Through their shared practices, community members develop a shared sense of being and doing, that is, they develop a sense of shared habitus (Fenster, 2007; Halse, 2018; Orton-Johnson, 2014). Belonging to a community develops from the congruence between individual and community habitus as embodied through shared practices.

However, not all participants felt a sense of connection and belonging to their communities, even when engaging in similar practices. Some participants reported that even when they engaged in similar activities to a community group, they may not feel they fitted in, nor did they always want to. For example, although Emily (Tertiary Group) claimed to engage in similar practices to the student community, such as partying and drinking, she was at pains to differentiate herself:

I lived in ‘studentville’ for six months and I couldn’t do any more . . . even though I do like to party, I do like to drink, but yeah, not like that. I find them really messy and dirty and gross.

Emily rejected being identified with the other members of the student community and their practices despite being located in the same place, ‘studentville’. Emily had recently returned to study after taking a break in paid employment, which may have shaped her meaning-making of her experiences and fuelled her sense of disconnect from the student community. The cultural norms she perceived within the student community left Emily feeling like a ‘fish out of water’ (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Emily constructed her habitus as incongruent with the way she perceived the shared habitus of partying students, which

affected her sense of belonging to that community. While Emily did not fit in, she also did not want to be seen as fitting in.

Other participants reiterated that not fitting in prevented belongingness. One of those participants, Jacinta (Community Group), gave a clear example of the way habitus, or ways of being and doing, influenced her connectedness to place and space:

it is kind of almost like an emotional thing because like, I was born in [town], but emotionally I'm not really a citizen. It's nothing really to do with me anymore . . . I don't feel I belong to that town, but then like, [city], I feel more like a citizen here. The fact is that I have friends and community and stuff to do. When I was in [town] it was just farming and old people and like teenage boys who drive around in Hiluxes and stuff . . . I didn't really fit in there, but in [city] I feel like a bit more belonged [sic], which makes me more of a citizen.

Jacinta constructed citizenship through a sense of belonging that developed from social connections and similar ways of being. Her description reflects the way a mismatch between individual and community habitus when growing up, affected her connection to place. Conversely, Jacinta's connections to her newer friends and community, and the shared interests of "stuff to do", represented a match between Jacinta's way of being and the habitus she associated with the city. Her subjective meaning-making of her experiences fuelled her feelings of exclusion and/or inclusion within community places and spaces (Brah, 1996; Reitsamer & Zobl, 2014). For Jacinta, the congruence between individual and community habitus strengthened her sense of belonging to the city, and thus strengthened her sense of citizenship.

Belonging was not only about the individual's feelings of fitting in. Several participants emphasised that community members needed to recognise an individual's claim to belong. For these participants, belonging to a community involved more than being present in place/space, it also encompassed a common sense of purpose and goals. For instance, several participants mentioned that young people of a similar age opted to live in the same place as their community for the lifestyle, but did not attend the same institution: "people who live around here and act as we do, but they don't go to [institution], like I would not call them part of my [institution] community because they don't have that common goal of why we're here" (Kate, Tertiary Group). Kate positioned some who lived in her place-

based community as not belonging. Communities become “networks of belonging” (Fenster, 2007, p. 250), where individuals have a shared sense of being and doing. Without that shared sense, belonging to a community is difficult. Although these individuals had similar ways of doing such as joining in at student parties, Kate felt they did not share a similar way of being as they were not students. Kate thus perceived their habitus and practices as not congruent with the normalised habitus and practices of her community.

Claims by others to belong to communities was a source of frustration for some participants. These participants emphasised that making a claim to be part of a community was not enough to create a reciprocated connectedness if the individual did not participate in recognised ways:

I'm a part of [sports team] because I go to the games, I pay the fees, I play, I go to practices. I contribute to that group. And because of that I am part of that group . . . if you've just done nothing you cannot say that you are part of that community. . . . you can't say yourself that "oh I'm part of this community" and have no one backing you up. I think you need people to back you up in saying that you are part of a community and a citizen (Darrel, Waiporoporo College).

Here, Darrel was referring to people who identify as part of a sporting community yet make minimal contribution in terms of playing or supporting their sports teams and others in the community. Belonging is more than an individual feeling, it is also a social recognition of the individual's right to claim a connection to the community (May, 2011). For these participants, citizenship and belonging were constructed through participatory practices that were recognised as contributing to the community. Interestingly, Darrel felt similar criteria existed for online spaces:

if you just go to [a Facebook] page and just look at their stuff and just look at it, you can't say that you're part of it, . . . you have to put your voice forward do things to help it.

May (2011) reminds us that belonging is more than familiarity with place/space, it is also acceptance by others of our claim to belong. These participants highlighted the spatial relations that underpin belonging and citizenship, where belonging develops through practices enacted within the interrelational spaces between community members.

### 7.2.3 Belonging to digi-communities: “An extension of my normal life”

All of the participants in this study talked about digital citizenship as being ‘connected’. However, being ‘connected’ holds different connotations when referring to digital technologies. To be connected as a digital citizen may mean to be technologically connected to the internet and connected to a vast network of digitally-mediated places/spaces. Alternatively, to be connected as a digital citizen may refer to being connected to people and communities located in material and/or digitally-mediated place/spaces.

The majority of participants constructed digital citizenship as belonging to digitally-mediated communities of people. For most, ‘online’, digitally-mediated communities such as Facebook, were a reflection or extension of their ‘offline’ communities and connections to people. Nikolai (Community Group), for instance, felt most digitally-mediated communities were extensions of physical communities that crossed from material to digitally-mediated spaces:

I think there is no difference essentially . . . the mechanism of how you make the communities is just easier and more efficient. . . . there are some communities that are just digital, but for the most part they are digital and they’re physical, like a sporting page or something. . . . digi-communities are probably an extension of real communities

Nikolai constructed digitally-mediated communities as more efficiently constructed extensions of ‘real’ communities that translated across digital and physical mediums. For community members, interactions often begin in one medium and then shift to others (Preece & Maloney-Krichmar, 2005).

Participants felt that digitally-mediated spaces provided an opportunity to engage with others in a wider online community, as well as in multiple smaller communities. Jill (Community Group) provided a typical explanation of what digitally-mediated communities offered participants:

there are lots of little, different communities, so like on Facebook I’ve got my friends and my family . . . for me it’s just an extension of my normal life. It’s just a way for me to contact other people, or share things that I like with everyone, and see other things that other people are interested in that I might find interesting as well. . . . it’s just a wider spread community.

For participants, communities based around shared interests and ways of being, contributed to a sense of connection with others with a similar habitus or way of being. Although some online communities overlapped with offline communities through connections to community members such as friends and family, digitally-mediated spaces also provided a way to form new connections with others with similar habitus and practices, or ways of being and doing.

Several participants described the way digitally-mediated communities provided niche spaces where those who do not ‘fit’ within their existing communities could seek out others with similar interests. Zoey (Tertiary Group), for example, found social media allowed her to connect with others with similar interests, meaning she no longer felt isolated:

I don’t know many other vegans and so to connect online is great. . . . before, you were stuck and the people you meet, like in person that’s all you know. But now, if you’re a minority in some aspect, you can go online and connect with these people around the world and it doesn’t make you feel alone.

During the interview, Zoey had expressed doubts about whether digitally-mediated connections were as fulfilling because she preferred face-to-face interactions. Despite that, she acknowledged that digitally-mediated spaces provided her with access to a broader network of people drawn together by a common interest in veganism. Individuals develop a sense of belonging and connectedness to community through the embodiment and performance of shared ideas, values and practices (Halse, 2018). For Zoey, and the other participants who saw the benefits in seeking communities of interest, joining and belonging to communities was about connecting to people with similar tastes and implicitly similar habitus. Addison (Waiporoporo College) also noted: “it’s definitely about fitting in. . . . if you find a big group of people who like the same stuff that you do, then of course they’re gonna feel like they belong more than they do in real life”. In these chosen contexts (Block, 2018), people connect and make meaning through personal networks developed around a shared interest and purpose (Ohler, 2010). Communities and networks based around shared interests become places/spaces that hold meaning and value as personalised and chosen communities that reflect individual’s embodied habitus (Fenster, 2007; Halse, 2018).

For some participants, however, connections and belonging formed through digitally-mediated spaces seemed shallow, less tangible copies of place-based communities. These participants felt the lack of face-to-face interactions challenged digitally-mediated

attachments and belongingness. Rachel (Tertiary Group) was one of the participants who argued that digitally-mediated connections were ‘not real’ unless there was some face-to-face component:

it's not the same, I don't think it ever will be. Um, I guess skype is like the closest, probably because you have the face to face connection. . . . I think it loses a sense of belonging and connection as well.

Mediated communication is often constructed as a “diminished form of face-to-face conversation” with less social cues, decreased intimacy and therefore less sense of connection (Baym, 2015, p. 58). Nonetheless, D. Chambers (2013) reminds us that digitally-mediated communications have offered opportunities for reconfiguring personal relationships and ways of doing intimacy. Later in her interview, Rachel disclosed that she had met someone via an internet dating application, but that until they met in person, the relationship had not seemed real: “You need that face-to-face interaction or it's just not real. It can't be . . . like I've known this person for a year, but like have I actually? (Laughs) I don't know. It's weird”. Rachel questioned her ability to ‘know’ her friend even after some time interacting via digital technologies. Digital media has raised issues over the authenticity and strength of digitally-mediated connections (Baym, 2015; D. Chambers, 2013). Social media allows individuals to craft and control their digitally-mediated embodiment of habitus and fuels fears of deceptive identity performances (Baym, 2015; boyd, 2014; boyd & Heer, 2006; D. Chambers, 2013). It is possible that Rachel, and the other participants, had taken-up discourses of risk and a distrust of internet-user identities that have not been verified in person. For this small group of participants, interactions that were solely digitally-mediated seemed less ‘real’ until they could be grounded through physical interactions.

Despite some participants’ misgivings about digitally-mediated connections, others described digitally-mediated spaces, especially Facebook, as familiar destinations that held meaning. Roseanna (Tertiary Group) offered an eloquent description of her Facebook community. She described how she initially felt that digitally-mediated attachments were difficult to build, but then realised that she had connections through the familiar spaces of interactions:

it's hard to have an attachment to a community as such because you feel like, you know, the Internet is just so broad that you could be anywhere. But in

saying that, I started thinking about it, and a) I go on basically the same websites every time, and b) Um, for example like my Facebook community . . . you kind of go on and it's like familiar. You know it's like a familiar space. . . . 90% of the people I talk to on Facebook I would see anyway. . . . It's just like a reflection of my [institution] community only online.

Roseanna constructed attachment to community as requiring a sense of place, of locating where you are. While Roseanna referred to her Facebook as a familiar space, it is a space imbued with meaning for Roseanna where she visited regularly, knew most of her 'Friends' from across multiple spaces and places, and where she enacts specific practices. As such, the space of Facebook feels like a 'place' for Roseanna, a familiar destination with meaning and value (Horton & Kraftl, 2013; Massey, 2005). Through repeated visits and interactions with others, Roseanna made and maintained an online community located in 'place' on Facebook (Benson & Jackson, 2012; Massey, 2005).

Participants reported that repeated visits to digital communities, such as Facebook, created a digital history. Again, Roseanna provided an eloquent description of the way Facebook had acted as a space/place that located, recorded, and maintained her historical connections over time:

I still have high school groups. And actually, sometimes we still get a few posts on them, so it is kind of in the nostalgic sense. And it's almost like you're making like a path or a ladder as you go in your life, and each rung you are creating this community, and then you step up because you're moving onwards, but you look behind and you can still kind of see it there and so it almost is like my Facebook marks my path along the way, you know. Like it keeps like a record of that I guess, which is quite nice.

For Roseanna, Facebook created a network of nostalgic relationships that maintained her connections to places and spaces and potentially reinforced her sense of belonging to past and present communities. Digitally-mediated communities are nostalgic spaces that represent and record individuals' performances of habitus over time, layering connections to others, as Roseanna described, as rungs on a ladder. As participants progress through their lives, both in time and place/space, there is a recorded history of their digitally-embodied habitus left behind as a digital trail. Facebook, and other digitally-mediated communities,

curate the moments of belonging and connectedness in people's lives, locating their identities as digital citizens by creating their historical digital footprint.

### 7.3 Summary

Citizenship has been described as the formal expression of belonging (Fenster, 2007). For the young people in this study, the legal status of citizenship symbolises the formal recognition by a nation-state of an individual's right to be present in the 'place' of the nation (Massey, 2005). Whether they constructed the relationship to nation-state as being imbued with inherent expectations, or merely as a technicality, the participants recognised that formal citizenship is a capital made visible through other symbolic capitals, such as passport documentation. However, there was no clear equivalent in digitally-mediated spaces. Instead, participants inferred their status as a digital citizen through forms of capital that serve to include and/or exclude individuals from digitally-mediated spaces, such as access and the digital skills to utilise that access to create a digital presence (Mossberger, Tolbert, et al., 2008b). For these young people, a digital presence, shown through accounts and profiles on websites, acted as symbolic capital, providing details of the individual's representation and making visible their relationship to digitally-mediated places and spaces.

Places and spaces become important sites of performative practices, such as connecting and interacting with others, that contribute to a sense of belonging for (digital) citizens. Belonging represents the affective connections to place/space. As the participants explicated, belonging arises when individual and collective habitus match, when individual ways of being and doing align with the norms and expectations of the community. While place may feel, for some, like the technicality that merely serves to locate communities of belonging (Yuval-Davis, 2011), place is space made meaningful (Horton & Kraftl, 2013; Massey, 2005). For these young people, place located citizenship and provided meaning and context to experiences. However, for many participants, belonging in digitally-mediated spaces was about connecting to others in communities that traversed physical and digitally-mediated spaces.

Digitally-mediated communities were often extensions of participants' existing physical communities. As such, participants were already familiar with expected ways of being and doing (digital) citizen in community spaces. Participants strengthened their connections to communities by performing habitus in expected ways, although some felt



connections that were only digitally-mediated were more fragile and less real than those formed face-to-face. For participants who struggled to find spaces where their habitus was accepted, digitally-mediated communities provided opportunities for new spaces of belonging. These niche spaces allowed individuals to find spaces where they could share ideas, values, and practices with others with a similar way of being and doing (Halse, 2018). When different community members' habitus match, spaces feel familiar and become spaces of belonging. Furthermore, as digitally-mediated spaces like Facebook become imbued with meaning through repeated practices, they feel more like places or destinations that locate and maintain records of interactions and connections.

How people make sense of their relational connections and belonging to community reflects the way they understand what it means to be and do (digital) citizen. As people make meaning of everyday practices within discursive spaces, they develop an affective sense of belonging and attachment to place and space that shapes embodied performances of habitus. For these participants, discourses of (digital) citizenship as formal status, participatory, and connected, shaped the way they made sense of (digital) citizenship as connection and belonging located in place and space. In the next chapter, I move on to explore how these understandings of their relational citizenship shaped the way young people identified as (digital) citizens and embodied their habitus when performing (digital) citizenship.

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## **Chapter 8: Doing Digital Citizenship: Embodying Digital Citizen Habitus**

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I focus upon the doing of digital citizenship in this, the fourth and final findings chapter of this study. How people do citizenship is shaped by how they understand citizenship. In previous chapters, I outlined how young people reacted to sanctioned ‘idealised’ concepts of digital citizenship that may not align fully with the ways they would define digital citizenship (Chapter 5). I explored how the young people in this study understood and reproduced discursive cues (Chapter 6), developed their habitus through making sense of their experiences, and located their (digital) citizenship in place and space through notions of belongingness and connectedness (Chapter 7). In this chapter, I focus upon the ways these young people identify as digital citizens and analyse how they embody their digital citizen habitus through lived practices, sometimes in ways that may not always conform to societal ‘ideals’. This chapter offers insights into the ways young people have internalised understandings of what it means to be digital citizen and how they then enact their understanding by making their habitus explicit through their digital citizenship practices.

As in previous chapters, I draw upon multiple theoretical constructs. To reiterate, I conceptualise digital citizenship as ‘digitally-mediated citizenship’ and utilise the term (digital) citizenship to reference citizenship habitus and practices that transcend interrelational spaces. In that vein, I utilise ‘citizenship’ to refer to offline practices and ‘digital citizenship’ as online practices. I continue to theorise ‘online’ and ‘offline’ as fluid interrelational spaces of practice, where ‘online’ spaces are mediated through digital technologies (Blanch, 2015). Furthermore, I understand habitus as a way of being that is embodied through social practices and interactions (Baars, 2017). Citizen habitus is embodied through the social practices that constitute citizenship (Isin & Nielsen, 2013). Together, habitus and capitals are made visible through practices.

To that end, the first section (Section 8.1) in this chapter analyses how participants identified as digital citizens and their reasoning for claiming ‘status’ as digital citizen. In the second section (Section 8.2), I analyse the ways these young people digitally embody their habitus, or way of being, and do digital citizenship in digitally-mediated spaces. I then move to the third section (Section 8.3), which explores the ways some participants pushed back against societal discourses and engaged in digital citizenship practices that do not conform

to the ‘ideal’ construction of digital citizenship outlined by Netsafe (Netsafe, 2015, September 16, 2018a, n.d.-b, n.d.-c) and sanctioned by the Ministry of Education (Te Kete Ipurangi, n.d.-d).

## **8.1 Identifying (or not) as Digital Citizens**

Whether these young people identified as digital citizens or not, was shaped by their understanding of what digital citizenship entailed. I have previously outlined the way the young people in this study pushed back against the sanctioned definition in New Zealand from Netsafe and how they defined the concept of digital citizenship (see Chapter 5). To reiterate, no participants recalled hearing the term ‘digital citizenship’ before this research. This did not prevent these young people from conceptualising what it may mean to be and do ‘digital citizen’. As discussed in the previous chapters, the young people in this study defined digital citizenship as, at the minimum, having a visible presence in digitally-mediated spaces. Expanding their definitions, they constructed digital citizens as members of online communities, participating in ways that represented their offline citizen identity, engaging and interacting with others, sharing their views, and producing and consuming content. Their understanding was shaped by their awareness of discourses of citizenship that construct digital citizenship as symbolic capital arising from participatory practices, and their understanding that being a member of online communities contributes to a sense of belonging.

### **8.1.1 “I think I am”**

Participation was a key factor for those participants who claimed to be digital citizens. The majority of the participants felt they were digital citizens, mostly because they participated and interacted in digitally-mediated spaces as members of communities. These young people felt comfortable interacting in digitally-mediated spaces, with most accessing digitally-mediated spaces regularly. For instance, Steve (Community Group) felt he was a digital citizen because he was constantly available online, as well as engaging with his gaming community daily:

I’m pretty much online all the time. Like my computer is probably on at the moment doing something and my phone’s like right here, and like, out of anyone I know I’m the easiest person to get in contact with because I’m just constantly online. . . . I partake pretty actively a lot as well. It’s like on a daily

basis kind of thing, like within especially the League of Legends community  
. . . I still play it like an hour, two hours a day kind of thing.

Steve described himself as a predominantly self-taught “technology person” who felt comfortable in his abilities to use digital technologies. He had the necessary digital capital, in terms of resources and skills, to be able to participate in digitally-mediated spaces, and his embodied habitus and practices appeared to reflect the active participation expected from a digital citizen by Mossberger, Tolbert, et al. (2008a). As a result, Steve felt at home, or in Bourdieusian terms, as “a fish in water” immersed in digitally-mediated spaces (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 127). He moved fluidly through offline and online spaces, staying connected and participating frequently. Steve’s frequent participation in the League of Legends community indicates it is likely his habitus, or way of being, aligned closely with those in the gaming community to begin with. Moreover, his frequent participation is an example of the way belonging develops and strengthens through familiarity and engagement in shared practices (Fenster, 2007; Leach, 2002; May, 2011).

While many participants referenced frequent participation, some felt their level of participation affected their claims to digital citizenship. Several participants acknowledged that they were not as active as others they knew, even though they felt comfortable in digitally-mediated spaces. These participants had internalised discourses that constructed citizenship as enacted through participation or the doing of citizenship practices (Isin & Nielson, 2013b). Ziva (Waiporoporo College), for example, was typical of these participants when she compared her digital practices to those of her brother, describing herself as a digital citizen “to a degree, definitely not as much as some people like my brother”. Like Ziva, these participants related their practices to others in their social context and compared their doing of digital citizenship in digitally-mediated spaces to the way they perceived others as doing digital citizenship. Nonetheless, they did not feel less frequent participation precluded them from being digital citizens.

Some participants based their claim to digital citizenship more upon their participatory practices and how they participated, rather than upon how frequently they participated. There were, however, variations in how participants gauged their participation. For instance, some participants evaluated their digital citizenship through prosumption, or their production and consumption of content online (McGillivray, McPherson, Jones, & McCandlish, 2016; Toffler, 1980). Betty (Waiporoporo College), for example, felt she was

a digital citizen because she was engaged on social media, creating connections and providing input: “I’ve been on Facebook for like years (laughs) and I’ve definitely ‘liked’ all the pages that I feel are connected to me or what I do, and I’ve always been able to put my input into those”. As Betty acknowledged, her practices on Facebook had led to the online re-production of her citizen identity and habitus: “it’s like a very basic form of who I am online . . . a massive collage of my likes and dislikes . . . like a log book of what I do all day”. Betty felt she was a digital citizen because her embodied habitus was visible on social media. She acknowledged the implicit expectation that social media use requires participatory actions such as the production and consumption of content (boyd, 2014) including ‘liking’ others’ posts, and sharing details of lived moments. For Betty, and other participants like her, digital citizen habitus was embodied on social media through the prosumption of content (McGillivray et al., 2016).

Not all participants felt they ‘prosumed’ however. Some participants felt they were still digital citizens even if they did not produce much ‘online’ content. For example, Emily (Community Group) claimed to consume rather than produce digitally-mediated content on social media, but felt she was still a digital citizen: “I think I am because I like, I engage in it. I think that still counts, even though I don’t create content for it”. For Emily, engaging with and consuming content was enough for digital citizenship. Like other participants, Emily’s practices were shaped by her experiences. For instance, she recounted how a negative experience meant she was now reluctant to post her original content to social media: “I’ve actually had a photo of mine just get taken without my permission and put on this website . . . it was one of my favourite photos and I was so mad about it”. Habitus, or ways of being, shape, and are shaped by, the way people make sense of their experiences (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). In claiming she did not produce content, Emily overlooked how she had already produced content for a social media site, as well as other users, in the form of her social media profile. Furthermore, she continued to produce content and embody her digital citizen habitus through her ongoing engagement with the sites, where every viewing and ‘Like’ of content contributed to her identity performance (Blanch, 2015; boyd, 2014). For young people, usage of social media spaces has become so normalised (boyd, 2014), they may not consider the prosumption that results from seemingly small interactions when using social media.

Like social media, digital participation and the use of digital technologies was a normalised part of modern life for many participants. Yet only a few participants explicitly referred to digital technologies as tools for digital citizenship. These few participants referred to digital technologies, such as the internet and internet-capable devices, as tools that they used to extend their everyday citizenship practices into digitally-mediated spaces. Nikolai (Community Group), for example, explained that he liked to feel he controlled how he used technology to do citizenship:

I like to have a feeling like ‘I am in control. I use technology to do stuff that Nikolai wants to do’ . . . I like to think, anyway, whether it’s true or not, that it’s little extensions of what I do normally, using the internet as like a tool. So yeah, I see my digital citizenship as just part of my citizenship.

Nikolai constructed his digital citizenship as a digitally-mediated form of his usual citizenship practices. He had explained during the interview that he felt being a digital citizen was, like citizenship, about participating and engaging with communities. Nikolai explained that, for him, technology was a tool that allowed easier interaction with the “friend community that you’ve tailor-made”. In other words, for Nikolai and others like him, digital citizenship and digital practices were an extension of everyday citizenship practices, made easier by the use of technology that made communities more easily accessible. For these participants, being and doing digital citizen was a normalised part of their citizenship habitus. In other words, these participants felt their way of being, or habitus, was consistent across online and offline spaces.

### **8.1.2 “It depends”**

A quarter of participants either had qualms about claiming to be digital citizens or rejected the notion outright. While half of this small group of participants felt that claiming digital citizenship depended upon how digital citizenship was defined, the others felt they were definitely not digital citizens.

For those who were unsure and felt their digital citizenship depended upon how the concept was defined, a key issue was trying to locate digital citizenship in place and space. For example, Roseanna (Tertiary Group) was one participant who felt that digital citizenship was more closely tied to the community spaces to which the digital citizen belonged, than it was to the broader concept of the internet:

the Internet is so vast and wide, and digital is a very wide concept, digital covers everything. Maybe if you said do you think of yourself as a Facebook citizen, I'd say yeah probably. . . . I use the Internet very specifically and to think of myself as a globally digital citizen is a bit odd just because there are so many websites out there that it feels strange to be part of something so big.

For this group of participants, the scale of the internet left them feeling disconnected. Like Roseanna, they felt their digital citizenship could only be defined and located within specific community spaces, such as their Facebook community. In other words, the participants could locate their digital citizenship in familiar community spaces where they had a sense of shared habitus and a sense of belonging, but the scale of the internet, comprised of multiple communities and digitally-mediated spaces, left participants feeling overwhelmed. For these young people, digital citizenship was about being connected to specific communities where they could have a sense of the expected ways of being and doing.

A few participants were concerned about the implications of calling themselves digital citizens as they felt there were negative discourses associated with the use of digital technologies. Although these participants acknowledged connections to various sites, they did not necessarily feel, or want to claim digital citizenship of those sites. They felt that being labelled a digital citizen might imply they had lost control and perhaps had an unhealthy obsession with digital technology. For instance, Hayes (Tertiary Group) accepted he was “part of a digital world” because his personal identifying details were present across websites. However, he felt that claiming to be a digital citizen might imply a negative relationship with technology:

it depends what the definition is. Like, I definitely feel like I am part of a digital world because my name is on the internet. All my, a lot of my details have been saved on some site, so I suppose in that way I am. But I don't know. I feel like if you call yourself a digital citizen it might come off as a negative connotation that you have no life, you're always just spending your time doing something in seclusion . . . for me, I would say maybe once a week is enough to say that you use it sufficiently.

Hayes was apprehensive about the implications in being labelled a digital citizen. Earlier in the interview, Hayes had expressed concern that digital citizens should not become overly reliant upon digital technologies and compromise their physical and/or mental health. His



disquiet re-presented the negative discourses that construct the frequent use of digital technologies as risky, isolating, and distinct from offline citizenship practices. These fears were echoed by others, such as Cheekie (Kikorangi College), who equated digital citizenship to an addiction: “I’m not addicted to [Facebook], so I’m not really a citizen”. Cheekie and Hayes are examples of the way some participants took-up and re-produced negative discourses in ways that imbued digitally-mediated practices with meaning. In essence, the participants who were uncomfortable at being labelled digital citizens appeared to have taken up discourses that constructed young people’s use of digital technologies and digitally-mediated spaces as risky and out of control. Although these participants continued to access social media and other digitally-mediated spaces, negative discourses shaped the way they made meaning of their habitus and practices.

### **8.1.3 “I would say no”**

Only three participants stated they were definitely not digital citizens, and each offered different reasoning. Of the three, two could be understood as feeling they did not embody digital citizenship through their practices. For instance, Darrel (Waiporoporo College) initially said he would not consider himself a digital citizen because he did not participate frequently enough: “I don’t think I use it enough to be called a citizen”. However, he subsequently indicated that he was defining his digital citizenship based upon ‘how’ he participated: “I will just watch movies and play games, but that barely ties into the internet, those games . . . it can be used for so much more, but I don’t do that”. Darrel had earlier defined citizenship as contributory participation that helped the community, but he felt his use of internet technologies leaned towards passive consumption of content and that he did not use technologies to their full potential. Interestingly, his stance that his consumption practices prevented him from being a digital citizen was at odds with other participants, such as Emily, who felt they were still engaging even when not producing content.

On the other hand, Alen’s (Tertiary Group) participation did involve active generating of content. Nevertheless, Alen felt he was not a digital citizen because his behaviours and practices online did not match what he believed was expected of a digital citizen. Alen revealed that, since being harangued on Facebook, he now used a ‘fake’ social media account with a pseudonym to engage with people he did not personally know:

I actually do have a fake Facebook account, because if you comment underneath someone's other comment then you're likely to get abused by them. . . . all those inhibitions are gone, I can say whatever I want.

For Alen, dissociating his online identity from his offline identity provided a sense of freedom from consequences. Yet, using a fake profile to voice his opinion does not mean that Alen would not still face abuse for comments that other users found inappropriate or offensive. Furthermore, Alen's decision to use a fake profile to address the inappropriate responses from others could serve to reinforce fears of 'strangers' on the internet and contribute to perceptions of risk.

Both Darrel and Alen felt they did not embody a digital citizen habitus. Although they engaged with others in digitally-mediated spaces, neither felt that their online practices matched the expected ways of being and doing digital citizen. They had internalised expectations of participatory actions on social media in different ways (boyd, 2014; McGillivray et al., 2016). Darrel felt that using social media carried expectations of social interactions rather than passive consumption, whereas Alen understood that Facebook expected genuine names to be used for profiles (Facebook, n.d.) and that his sense of anonymity changed the way he engaged on Facebook.

Interestingly, one participant rejected the concept of digital citizenship. As noted in previous chapters (see Chapters Five and Seven), Adriano (Community Group) emphasised global citizenship over what he perceived was the technicality of being a citizen of a nation-state. He dismissed the concept of a digital citizen as "silly" and felt a digitally-mediated habitus was "just an online . . . representation" of a citizen of Earth:

I know technically I'm a citizen of New Zealand, even though I don't feel that sort of ownership. But digital citizen? I would say no. . . . I don't think anyone is a digital citizen. You're a literal citizen and you go on the Internet sometimes. . . . I'm just Adriano and sometimes I just want to go and see what's happened on Facebook and check my emails.

Like Nikolai (and others), Adriano treated digital technologies as a tool to enable participation in digitally-mediated spaces. He recognised that online practices embodied his way of being citizen and created an online representation of himself, but he did not feel these

resulted in a distinct digital citizenship habitus. Rather, Adriano understood digital technologies were a tool to embody citizenship in digitally-mediated spaces.

How these young people perceived digital citizen habitus shaped their view of themselves as digital citizens. Whether they identified as digital citizens or not, for the most part their reasoning was based upon notions of participation and doing digital citizenship. For the young people in this study, participation was key. For some, how frequently they participated in digitally-mediated spaces was the main factor; for others, the defining reason was the way they understood their participatory practices in relation to community; whilst for others, digital technologies were merely tools to enable digitally-mediated participation. At times, one person's reason for claiming digital citizenship was another person's reason to feel uncertain about whether they were a digital citizen. For some participants who were uncertain about their digital citizenship, a sense of belonging as digital citizen was difficult when digitally-mediated spaces seemed vast, and discourses of risk shaped understandings of participation. Ultimately, identifying as a digital citizen, or not, was based upon how participants felt their own attitudes, values, and online behaviours and practices, aligned with their perception of what it meant to be and do digital citizen.

## **8.2 Enacting Digital Citizen Practices**

For the most part, the young people in this study were relatively comfortable navigating digitally-mediated spaces. All participants used digital technologies and described participatory actions in digitally-mediated spaces, even those who felt they did not participate frequently. As has been referenced throughout the previous findings chapters, their participation followed common themes, such as engaging and connecting with friends and family as well as with their communities built around common interests; consuming, producing, and sharing content; using digitally-mediated spaces for education and learning; and economic participation such as seeking employment and shopping 'online'. How the participants used digital technologies to participate reflected their construction and embodiment of identity and way of being, or habitus, in digitally-mediated spaces (Baars, 2017).

### **8.2.1 Participating in the formal political process**

Core to notions of citizenship participation are the concepts of political and social actions. For the majority of the young people in this study, social media, especially Facebook,

provided spaces where they could be politically and socially active. Many participants had used social media to access information and to selectively engage in discussions around political issues during the prior election period, as Emily (Community Group) outlined:

with this election just passed, we talked about it a lot on Facebook obviously, but that's more with my friends. Even though my family are all on Facebook we don't, because it would just, yeah. Just no. (Laughs) keyboard warriors, so... (Laughs).

Participants used digitally-mediated spaces to engage in informal political discussions with peers, although as Emily laughingly noted, not necessarily with opinionated family members, who might act as 'keyboard warriors' seeking to change their political views. Young people often find their participation is criticised in public spaces (Beals & Wood, 2012; Harris et al., 2007) which may explain why these young people limited their discussions to spaces where they felt comfortable. For those who engaged in political discussions, digitally-mediated spaces were places where they could choose to be politically active among peers with similar ways of being and doing.

Not all participants engaged in political participation online or offline. While most participants were interested in political discussion in some form, a small group of male tertiary participants appeared disengaged from formal and informal political participation. These young men had chosen not to engage in political discussions or vote in elections. They claimed disinterest in the process: "I don't have very much high political interest" (Hayes, Tertiary Group). However, Tomas' (Tertiary Group) explanation as to why he was disinterested offers an insight into the contradictory ways he constructed his political participation:

People don't care, politics is considered boring . . . people get really opinionated and it just seems like a waste of time and energy. And I think there's definitely a feeling in my generation that whatever you do isn't going to do anything. . . . no matter what you do, they don't listen to you and they don't care. But I just don't care that much.

Tomas' protestations that people his age find politics boring was at odds with his statement that 'people' then get opinionated when discussing politics. It is possible that his claim that discussing politics was 'boring' was a way to avoid conflict with others. At the same time, Tomas may recognise that it is difficult and perhaps a 'waste of time' trying to change the

political thinking and habitus of others. Tomas highlighted why, even when able, young people may choose not to engage in political spaces (Painter & Philo, 1995). For Tomas, being politically active was pointless if politicians did not care about young people's views and his participation would be ignored. His feeling that his political actions would be ignored is a common reason young people may feel disenfranchised and disengaged from formal political engagement online, or offline (R. Hipkins & Satherley, 2012).

### **8.2.2 Engaging and connecting through everyday social practices**

Political spaces are not always about formal political processes. The young people in this study frequently engaged in social actions and the often-unrecognised everyday moments of digital citizenship (MacKian, 1995; B. E. Wood, 2012) that reaffirm digital citizen habitus. For instance, several participants mentioned that they actively engaged in informal political and social action through the use of petitions spread through digitally-mediated spaces:

There's petitions and stuff online now as well. There's a lot of that. . . . it does make you feel like you're actually kind of part of something . . . they always kinda come up, mostly on your Facebook page they come up, people try and get you to like them . . . I'm kinda like a little bit like selective about it, like I don't sign for no reason yeah. I'd probably more so if they're actually like personal to me or its one of my close friends who is kinda like promoting it, just to support them kind of thing (Cloe, Tertiary Group).

Cloe, like other participants, signed 'online' petitions about issues that interested her personally. As Cloe's explanation illustrated, participants who engaged in digitally-mediated social and political actions did so for reasons of personal conviction and to support their social connections. Participants mentioned petitions such as calling for changes in animal welfare practices at a marine park in the United States, and local petitions challenging the representation of young people in the media. Such participation has been derogatorily referred to as 'slacktivism' by some and denigrated as requiring low personal effort for immediate personal satisfaction and impression management (H. S. Christensen, 2011; Hogben & Cownie, 2017). Yet research shows that, while digitally-mediated moments of activism and social action often do not achieve their goals, they may lead to an increase in overall political engagement (Hogben & Cownie, 2017). Whether participants engaged for political reasons, or for impression management with peers, small everyday acts of social

and political action are practices that make visible ways of being, and potentially shape future practices.

Participants regularly engaged in everyday social practices that constitute citizenship (Isin & Nielsen, 2013), such as creating connections and helping other community members. Many of the participants said they used social media platforms, such as Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, and Twitter, as digitally-mediated social spaces to create and maintain ongoing connections to friends, family, and their communities. Through their practices and ways of doing, such as participating and offering their time and knowledge, participants embodied their ways of being.

Participants used digitally-mediated spaces to support and help their friends and other community members. Addison (Waiporoporo College), for instance, described how she tried to emotionally support friends when necessary: “on the internet and stuff if someone’s feeling down or something, I’ll try and cheer them up . . . I like people being happy”. Addison’s practices of supporting others were driven by her desire to see people happy. As well as emotional support, participants often provided practical support through social actions such as sharing information and knowledge. For example, Jill (Community Group) located herself within a local place-based community of pet owners. Through associated social media groups, Jill engaged in participatory citizenship practices that helped others in her local community, as she explained:

I help out. I see a lot of people try and find their pets and stuff, and so if I’ve been in the area and I’ve seen anything, I’m like, you know, I’ll help. And then people on the pets’ page that ask questions about animals and things, . . . I try and help them out with what I know. So, sharing information and stuff, there’s that kind of thing.

Jill’s description of her digital citizenship practices was typical, with many participants saying they used social media to try to help their communities and wider social networks. Participants used digitally-mediated spaces to embody their digital citizen habitus through practices, such as providing information about pet care or helping locate lost pets, and in doing so, re-presented and reinforced the shared habitus of the community spaces.

For some, social actions involved contributing to a shared habitus by reinforcing what they felt were appropriate behaviours in digitally-mediated spaces, such as calling out

other users of digitally-mediated spaces when they behaved inappropriately. Betty (Waiporoporo College), for example, explained that she knew the people who operated a Facebook page posting memes about Waiporoporo College staff and therefore felt comfortable commenting if she felt material became too abusive, although she was careful how she did so:

I know the people who started the page, and if there was something that was outright poking fun at a teacher or a student, I'd definitely comment on it like 'you need to take that off'. . . . it's like giving your opinion in a way that doesn't seem like it's your opinion. Just sort of giving them a little push, that they'll be like 'oh, need to take that one down or change it a bit' . . . but not doing it in a way that you're controlling or over-opinionated and abusive.

Betty was not alone in recognising that challenging the behaviours of others required diplomacy so as not to appear equally at fault. As Emily (Community Group) commented, social media meant that responses could be carefully crafted: "you can edit it, so you don't sound like you're being a dick". These participants were conscious of how they re-presented their digital citizen habitus when challenging socially unacceptable behaviours. As a result, they carefully crafted their practices to best re-present an appropriate way of being and doing in digitally-mediated spaces.

At times, however, participants discounted the social actions inherent in their everyday practices and consequently overlooked the way their actions might illustrate digital citizenship. For example, Alen (Tertiary Group) claimed not to be a digital citizen because he used a fake Facebook account to engage with others anonymously (see Section 8.1.3). Yet, when asked about his digital practices, Alen described engaging in social actions that were similar to those mentioned by other participants as examples of doing digital citizenship:

helping other people. Assisting them with, like for example, our study group, some people ask for resources, so you give them some of your own resources . . . Sharing knowledge. Like some people, like there's lots of inaccurate lies online, so I try to, like, push people in the right direction. . . . Sharing is better for everyone's sake.

Previously, Alen had defined being a citizen as abiding by the laws of the nation-state. He felt that social participation was not expected of citizens, which may explain why he discounted many of his own digital citizenship practices as social actions. Yet seemingly everyday actions, such as helping others and sharing resources, are the citizenship practices that form connections and bind communities together. In Alen's case, his actions were examples of voluntary labour for the good of others. He shared his resources, knowledge, and time to help others educate themselves, trying to 'push them' towards more informed views. Although he rejected any claim to digital citizenship, Alen engaged in practices that other participants considered as embodying a digital citizen habitus. Alen offered a clear example of the way everyday actions may be overlooked as citizenship practices (MacKian, 1995; B. E. Wood, 2012).

Participants further engaged in everyday moments of citizenship by using social media to participate in community events. Almost all of the participants used Facebook to stay in contact and be aware of what was happening within their social communities. Emily's (Community Group) explanation of how she and her friends used Facebook for social events was typical:

Other than looking, and sharing articles with my friends, we use Facebook for the events because events are like a huge thing and obviously it's always the same kind of crowds. So, I check my events every week and plan my week from what's on, and they're always the same people, like, just the [city] scene.

For Emily, events that were shared on Facebook involved the 'same people'. In other words, Emily was part of a community of people connected through a shared interest in similar events and a shared way of being. Shared community events, such as social gatherings and parties, are opportunities for community members to embody shared ways doing social practices, such as drinking and socialising. Digitally-mediated community spaces on social media, such as Facebook, provide opportunities for interactions that reaffirm the shared habitus of a particular Facebook group or community.

A few participants, however, described being selective in their use of social media to connect to wider communities. These participants either chose to avoid social media, or purposefully limited their interactions. For instance, Ziva (Waiporoporo College) explained that she had stopped using Facebook because she had felt excluded from social events. As a



result, she had moved to using a different social media platform that allowed her to express her way of being with others who shared a similar habitus:

I don't use Facebook and I don't really connect to a whole lot of people . . . I used to be, but it made me feel really, really crap. I have a quite bad FOMO, so like a Fear Of Missing Out, and seeing my friends doing things that I wasn't invited to, I really struggled with that. . . . [but] I got my camera . . . and I got an Instagram and took some photos and that's been good in a way, in that I don't connect to people that I'm friends with at school because they post photos of themselves and their lunch and I don't. So, I can connect with people from all over the world that have similar interests and stuff and I find that really interesting. . . it's all about specific interests and you can filter everything else out.

While Ziva felt excluded from her school-based community and the events her friends organised via Facebook, she had used another form of social media, Instagram, to gain a sense of inclusion. Having self-excluded from Facebook, Ziva used Instagram to build communities based around her interests, such as photography, that more closely suited her habitus. Using content filters, she could control her inclusion in various communities. Such selective social media use enabled participants to join or build communities that supported their preferred ways of being and doing digital citizenship based around their interests and hobbies.

### **8.2.3 Participating by consuming, producing, and sharing content**

For most participants, the use of digitally-mediated spaces for relaxing and consuming entertainment was a regular part of their daily lives. Participants constructed the consumption of content and participation in social media spaces as a social norm: "I think it has become a real like 'nothing to do', like kind of almost a relaxing thing is to go on Facebook now. So, a lot of people do it in their down time" (Jodie, Tertiary Group). However, for some participants, social media was a way to participate in digitally-mediated spaces whilst minimising interaction and connection to others, but without risking their social capital or social standing with others. Roseanna (Tertiary Group), for instance, was one of several participants who, at times, used social media to maintain some distance in their interactions with others:

I find social interactions tiring and I need the down time to recover from that. So, for me, digital contact is a really good tool because I can still be there and be talking to someone without the commitment of having to actually interact. I don't know whether that's a good thing or a bad thing.

Roseanna could appear to be participating and maintain her social capital with her peers, whilst retaining control over her interactions within digitally-mediated spaces. Participants who, like Roseanna, used social media to control their level of personal interaction, reproduced discourses of citizenship, and of social media, as participatory (Beer & Burrows, 2010). They appeared to feel obligated to participate and engage with others. For these participants, social media was an impression management tool that allowed them to avoid interactions without appearing to be avoiding their social connections and responsibilities.

Some participants, however, found interactions on social media still felt too demanding and preferred to relax with more passive forms of entertainment. Antonio (Tertiary Group) explained that participating actively on social media required energy he did not have after spending his day interacting with others:

Because my work involves lots of like talking to people and stuff like that, I get quite tired by the end of the day and I just don't want to talk to anybody else (laughs). So, I tend to just, maybe just relax online, yeah, and do something that doesn't involve any sort of conscious output. . . . I don't tend to do a lot of commenting on posts after work and that sort of stuff, because I just can't be bothered. I might just watch a movie or something like that (Antonio, Tertiary Group).

Whereas Roseanna maintained a level of interaction, Antonio chose to withdraw from interactions and instead passively consume content produced by others. Earlier, Antonio had described participating and contributing to the community as 'compulsory' for citizenship offline, yet optional online (see Section 5.3). Having spent his workday interacting with others offline, Antonio felt less compulsion to do so in his spare time online. In effect, Antonio resisted constructions of digital citizenship as requiring participation in the form of interactions and instead constructed consumption of content as an appropriate digital citizenship practice.

The consumption of content, especially for entertainment, was a key purpose for participants' use of digitally-mediated spaces. Most participants described their use of digitally-mediated spaces as consuming, rather than producing, content for consumption by others. Interestingly, participants often claimed that they did not produce much original content: "I've posted a couple of videos on YouTube, but I often just use YouTube to listen to music or watch videos of something" (Chairan, Kikorangi College). Yet many used social media such as Instagram, as Ziva (Waiporoporo College) mentioned, which usually involves posting original pictures. Similarly, participants did not appear to consider their texts, messages, postings, and comments on other social media as originally produced content, although Adriano (Community Group) used terminology implying posts were creative endeavours that were crafted carefully: "online you've got like five minutes to create this beautifully crafted message". Indeed, many of the participants reported that they and their social networks used social media to consume and share content such as memes, photos, videos, and articles, often creating new iterations by adding commentary. Although participants tended to view themselves primarily as consumers, their practices reflected that of prosumers (Beer & Burrows, 2010; Ritzer, 2013; Ritzer & Jurgenson, 2010). The participants' prosumption of content may be thought of as a form of everyday participatory citizenship that contributed to their community, for example by providing entertainment for others, and/or by providing social recognition of others' content through consumption (Kuehn, 2011).

Participants used digital technologies as a tool to enable them to create shared moments with their communities via material and digitally-mediated spaces. For instance, Emily (Community Group) described the way she and her friends used social media to share content with each other so they could later discuss that content in person:

you just share an article and like, click on it and read about it and then discuss it . . . we usually discuss it in person after reading it on Facebook . . . we do a lot of tagging of each other to like draw each other's attention to that.

For participants like Emily, social media became a tool that could be used to share information and create shared experiences and points of interest, actions likely to foster a sense of connectedness (Fenster, 2007; Leach, 2002). Such sharing practices traversed and blurred boundaries between material and digitally-mediated spaces as participants incorporated their digitally-mediated spaces into their offline spaces. As Antonio (Tertiary

Group) noted about sharing digitally-mediated content, “If people are with you, you tend to show them that. If they're not, you like tag them in a post or something like that. So, it's quite good”. For participants, the presumption and sharing of content was a way to strengthen their connectedness and belonging across transmediated communities and contribute to the shared habitus of a community. However, the everyday moments in which they embodied a citizen habitus, such as through participatory and contributory practices, tended to be overlooked by participants (MacKian, 1995; B. E. Wood, 2012).

#### **8.2.4 Engaging in learning**

For most participants, doing digital citizenship included using digitally-mediated spaces for education and learning. With the majority of participants studying at secondary or tertiary level, it was not surprising that most embodied a student habitus and used digitally-mediated spaces for formal education purposes, such as producing assessment work: “homework, lots of homework online, but that’s not particularly interesting” (Ziva, Waiporoporo College). However, participants also re-produced constructions of the New Zealand citizen as a lifelong learner (Ministry of Education, 2007) and used digitally-mediated spaces for informal education outside of the classroom. For example, Jill (Community Group), who was unemployed and not in formal education or training, was trying to stay mentally active by watching educational YouTube videos:

because I’m doing nothing at the moment and I can’t find work, I hate it and it’s driving me nuts, so I’m trying to stay educated, and I find I’m like learning so much from YouTube. Like I watch a lot of things . . . I’m making use of my time while I’m not employed.

For Jill, staying educated was about staying engaged and mentally active and YouTube provided content she could engage with and learn from at no extra cost. YouTube has become a popular resource for educators who may access channels with educational video content (Sherer & Shea, 2011). There are, however, issues with self-directed learning approaches, such as variations in the quality of user-generated content, which depends on the ability of the learner to discern whether content is valid and reliable (Tan, 2013). Nonetheless, YouTube was an alternative route for Jill to engage in educational activities in preparation for gaining employment, often assumed as a marker of being a ‘productive citizen’ (Nairn, Higgins, & Sligo, 2012).

Throughout the interview, Jill emphasised her citizenship practices, such as helping in the community and trying to stay engaged and productively use her time while unemployed. She seemed anxious to push back against dominant discursive constructions of unemployed young people as problematic, not contributing, disengaged, and lacking aspiration (Simmons & Thompson, 2013; Sukarieh & Tannock, 2015). Jill used digitally-mediated spaces to challenge dominant discursive constructions of young people. While Jill and other participants' use of digitally-mediated spaces might be seen as upholding societal concerns around young people's over-reliance on technology (C. Davies & Eynon, 2013), using digitally-mediated spaces provided opportunities for Jill to re-interpret what it meant to be and do citizenship in ways that were meaningful and accessible for her.

Digitally-mediated spaces provided opportunities for participants to learn how others were being and doing citizen, and to gain information from multiple sources to inform their own way of being. Through making sense of their interactions with others, participants found they began to think differently about ways of being. For instance, Addison (Waiporoporo College) found she had shifted in her thinking on feminist issues following discussions with others on social media:

you learn a lot more from hearing other people's perspectives. Like this time last year I would not consider myself a feminist, but I definitely am now. Like, it opens your eyes to a whole new world. So, talking to people on the internet all around the world, you get to hear all their viewpoints and it's just a big eye opener.

Digitally-mediated spaces, especially social media spaces, have provided opportunities for new ways of learning about the world (Bode, 2016). Digitally-mediated spaces allowed Addison to learn about different ways of being, such as how others embodied their feminist habitus. In making meaning from these experiences, Addison found her own habitus had shifted to incorporate feminist ways of being and doing into her citizenship practices.

Social media spaces were popular with participants wanting to learn about their society. Participants used social media, especially Facebook, to get information about, and discuss, issues such as current events and news, as Emily noted above (see Section 8.2.3). For many, Facebook was a convenient source of information posted by a variety of sources: "a lot of news, international news, posts it online, or post interesting things to read" (Hayes, Tertiary Group). Several participants reported following a variety of news sources via

Facebook, with one participant, Jacinta (Community Group), explaining that she also sought sources beyond Facebook to gain information about current events:

I try to use a wide range of news sources. Then I just mostly go on Facebook and Reddit as well, because I've got a lot of that stuff on Facebook just by 'liking' the pages. . . . it means I have more knowledge of what's actually going on in the world and what I want my society to be like. . . . it just gives me a greater knowledge of what really is going on in the world, rather than what I'm being told by One News . . . because, you know, everything's biased.

Seeking information through digitally-mediated spaces allowed Jacinta to feel she was informed about global events. For Jacinta, being a digital citizen was about being part of a global digitally-mediated society: "everybody who has accessed the internet at all is part of the global internet digital society thing". She felt it was necessary to be widely informed in order to determine the society she wanted. However, the potential bias of traditional news sources led her to seek out a variety of sources. Young people often find Facebook a convenient source of news because it is already ubiquitous in their lives (Wang & Mark, 2017). However, an overreliance on Facebook as a news source can be problematic and unreliable (Bakshy, Messing, & Adamic, 2015). For instance, the news items that young people encounter through their Facebook news feed are not random, but are chosen by Facebook's algorithms and influenced by the young person's choice of sources to follow and engage with on Facebook, as well as by the behaviour of their social network of Facebook friends. In gathering her information from a variety of news sources, across multiple platforms, Jacinta embodied a habitus of active, discerning digital citizen, seeking reliable and diverse sources to inform "what I want my society to be like".

### **8.2.5 Participating in economic exchanges**

As well as sources of information, digitally-mediated spaces were frequently spaces of economic participation for the young people in this study. The majority of the participants indicated they used digitally-mediated spaces for activities such as seeking employment, accessing essential services, making purchases online, and exchanging their time and information for economic reward. Consequently, access to digitally-mediated spaces was constructed as necessary for participants to embody their citizen habitus through economic practices. For example, the participants commonly referred to needing access to digital

technologies so they could learn about, and apply for, employment opportunities: “just applying for jobs and stuff is often done, like online, and they’re turning everything digital” (Jacinta, Community Group). Older participants, in particular, complained that access to digital technology was necessary to access essential services for their homes: “applying for jobs and getting power and internet sorted and those sorts of things, like finding income, using the internet is kind of an essential thing almost” (Nikolai, Community Group). To be a citizen in New Zealand is to be a contributing and participating member of society (Mutch, 2005, 2013). Access to digitally-mediated spaces shaped participants’ opportunities to participate and contribute as citizens, including their opportunities to be part of the workforce.

Participants’ economic participation was not limited to participating in the workforce or purchasing essential services. The majority of participants from all groups reported they used digitally-mediated spaces to purchase goods: “online shopping is a really big one for me” (Betty, Waiporoporo College). Using digitally-mediated spaces allowed participants to access economic spaces that they might be limited from accessing in person: “as opposed to finding all the specials in a small town . . . you can find specials from all over the world and there’s like really cheap deals” (Antonio, Tertiary Group). Purchasing goods online gave participants the opportunity to engage in digital citizenship practices that transcended geoborders. For most of these young people, economic participation in digitally-mediated spaces was normalised and embodied through their digital practices.

The exchange of economic capital was not always one way. A small group of participants from Kikorangi College reported regularly completing online surveys at various websites for economic gain. One of these participants, Chairan, explained how they leveraged their opinions and time to earn economic rewards:

with Smile City you can, you make an account and then you can earn reward points. Now those reward points you can bid on cashless auctions which only have reward points in them . . . there’s different surveys about things like rugby, there’s been sports, things to do with what you watch on TV, all kinds of things really . . . the shorter the survey, the less points you earn. But sometimes the surveys are set up so that if you’re under 18 they’ll basically just cut you ‘cause they don’t really need you, but you’ll still get 30 reward points.

Embodied practices arise from the interplay between capital and habitus within diverse contexts, including online spaces (Maton, 2012). Participants were trading their information, opinions and time, that is, their cultural capital, for economic capital in the form of rewards points that could then be used to purchase goods. Despite being some of the youngest and least economically independent participants, this small group of participants were taking advantage of opportunities offered by some digitally-mediated spaces to adopt and embody economic practices as part of their digital citizen habitus.

Through their participation in digitally-mediated spaces, participants had the chance to experience and make meaning of new ways of being and doing that shaped how they then embodied their digital citizen habitus through practice. In the next section, I discuss the ways participants' meaning-making and doing of digital citizenship did not always adhere to societal constructions of what it means to be and do as the 'ideal' digital citizen.

### **8.3 Doing Digital Citizenship Differently: Constructing New Social Norms**

Digitally-mediated spaces make possible practices that may not conform to the 'ideal' of digital citizenship, as discussed in the literature review (see Section 3.3). In the previous sections, and indeed throughout previous chapters, I have analysed the way the young people in this study were constructing digital citizenship and participating in digitally-mediated spaces in ways that reflected their meaning-making around what it means to be and do digital citizen. In this section, I examine how participants reported digital practices that do not align with the 'ideal' concept of digital citizenship, and how these young people made sense of these practices alongside their definitions and claims of digital citizenship. In order to protect participants' identities, I have chosen to report these practices without attribution or identifying details. In some cases, this has required minor wording changes without changing the meaning of participants' statements. As noted in Chapter 4, participants were reminded before, and at times during, interviews to consider which practices they disclosed. Consequently, the practices discussed in this section represent only those disclosed by participants and may not fully represent the full range of participants' 'nonconforming' digital practices.



### 8.3.1 Consuming pirated digital content

Some practices that might be considered ‘nonconforming’, and/or ‘illegal’ by nation-states, were taken for granted by participants. Participants most commonly mentioned accessing pirated and illegal content, either by streaming<sup>13</sup> or downloading<sup>14</sup> from a website. There were a number of reasons offered by participants for these consumption practices, such as knowing that others downloaded content without repercussion, a perception that streaming was less problematic than downloading, the perception of a lack of personal risk, convenience, the impersonal nature of any impacts, and minimisation of the impact on content owners or creators. Many participants offered several, and at times all, of these arguments to justify their practices and make rights claims for their acts of digital citizenship.

#### 8.3.1.1 *Re-producing new social norms: “Everyone does it”*

Participants justified streaming and downloading of pirated content as re-producing the normative practices of their friends and family:

[People learn to be citizens by] . . . seeing what other people are doing and sort of comparing what they're doing, and if everyone is doing it then it must be right. . . . If no one did it and one person said ‘oh I downloaded’ then it would be sort of a taboo thing, but everyone does it, and it's so easy to do. You just don't really think about it.

Because downloading pirated content was a common activity among their peers, participants felt their practices reflected the shared habitus of their peer group. Arguably, this acceptance was contributing to new social norms and constructions of ways of being and doing amongst their peer groups. Indeed, one participant argued that Internet Service Providers (ISPs) contributed to these new ways of doing and effectively encouraged ‘illegal’ practices by providing unlimited internet data:

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<sup>13</sup> Streaming is the real-time playing of media content on a local device, such as a computer or tablet. The media content is stored elsewhere, such as on a website server and accessed via the internet.

<sup>14</sup> Downloading of content involves saving the media content file to a local device for playing back at a later time.

Internet companies don't really mind, I think. Because we are using the Internet and to get us online they offer us unlimited plans, so we are using more data . . . And the only way that we really use more data is because lots of people don't really stream stuff, they just tend to download it, so they can watch it off-line.

Unlimited data plans might be viewed as offering individuals more control over their internet use and access. However, for this participant, unless people were downloading content there would be no need for unlimited data. Other participants similarly echoed the sentiment that ISPs "don't care" about policing behaviours and practices such as downloading. They felt that if downloading and streaming were highly unacceptable, then authority figures such as ISPs would attempt to control those behaviours.

Despite knowing that streaming and downloading were considered illegal activities outside of subscription sites such as Netflix, there was a general perception that the risk of getting caught by authorities was minimal. No participants knew anyone who had been held accountable for streaming or downloading pirated content: "there's like a three-strike rule or something like that and no one I know has ever even got a first strike". Nonetheless, some participants noted that if personal consequences seemed more likely, their behaviours would change:

if it meant I was more likely to get caught then I just personally wouldn't do it. Although I would still share other people's movies via a USB or take someone's music that's been downloaded on a USB, rather than actually downloading it myself. . . . even though I know it's like far-fetched to get caught, it's just that would be shit.

The perception of consequences (or lack of), and personal risk, shaped how participants enacted their digital practices. Behaviour changes were about minimising personal risk rather than not accessing illegally downloaded content. Furthermore, the perceived lack of response from authorities was interpreted by participants as implying their behaviours were socially acceptable. In other words, the risk of consequences might change how participants practiced their digital citizenship, such as sharing pirated content via USB rather than downloading content personally, but the perception of risk would not change their digital citizen habitus, or way of being in that they would still access pirated content in some form. The participants highlighted the way contrary discursive messages can be interpreted by

young people and shape their digital citizenship practices and habitus in digitally-mediated spaces.

### 8.3.1.2 *Re-constructing practices: “You’re supporting that person”*

Participants tended to differentiate between streaming and downloading, with streaming seen as the less problematic practice. There was a general perception that streaming of content was not ‘illegal’, although participants varied in their conviction: “I think it’s illegal to download, but if you’re streaming it’s illegal for the streamer . . . for the person who’s providing it, I think. I think. I’m not sure about that one”. In other words, participants perceived the passive consumption of content to be less problematic than the acquisition and possession of that content. Similarly, participants felt that downloading was a more serious action, especially if the people downloading then unfairly profited from the work of others: “you shouldn’t really make money from somebody else’s work. No matter how big the corporation is and when they’re making millions and billions off it”. However, participants revealed that they did not perceive a ‘victim’ of their actions, which made accessing content seem less problematic: “I suppose it just seems so faceless to me that I don’t really engage. . . . Like you don’t see the person you’re hurting, so you just take it”. Because content creators were not part of their community spaces and there was no sense of connectedness to the content creator, accessing pirated content seemed a relatively harmless citizenship practice.

Indeed, some participants offered a counter-discourse and constructed accessing pirated content as showing appreciation for the content, and ultimately benefitting the content creators economically by providing artistic recognition:

People want you to see their movie. People want you to listen to their song, and they know that if you like it enough you will go tell someone . . . the only way to make money is by having a large group of people knowing about it.

You’re supporting that person if you’re watching their video.

Some participants admitted they felt some guilt when they considered content creators. They acknowledged that their practices were often driven by their personal convenience:

I feel a sense of guilt when I do it though. Because I’m appreciating someone’s work, but I’m not doing it in the way that they want. . . . it’s just, it’s more convenient. Sometimes you can’t find things when you want them.

Despite feeling guilty, these participants prioritised their convenience and desire to view content, even when they thought their practices may not align with the content creator's wishes. Research on digital practices argues that minimising or re-constructing the impacts of what is considered 'digital piracy' by authorities is common among young people (Yu, 2012). The digital filters between content creators and consumers make it easier for individuals to deny there may be 'victims' or harm caused by their actions (Bonner & O'Higgins, 2010; Yu, 2012). However, most research into digital piracy considers copyright through a legalistic, business-oriented lens. In contrast, participants felt that their accessing of content was not problematic as long as they did not benefit economically, and they constructed their use of content as potentially benefitting the content creator. In other words, participants constructed their consumption of content as acceptable, but the re-production of content for profit as unacceptable. They re-constructed their practices as enactments of digital citizenship for the benefit, and support, of the content creator.

#### 8.3.1.3 *Claiming rights: "We have a right to access those things"*

Participants further re-constructed their streaming and downloading practices as digital citizenship rights claims and claimed the right to be able to access content in digitally-mediated spaces. For instance, a common reason offered by participants for streaming and downloading pirated content was issues around accessibility: "it's not always made available to New Zealand, so you have to find other ways of making it available". In accessing content unavailable in New Zealand, participants claimed the right to access the content and spaces available to digital citizens who may be located in different places.

Similarly, participants claimed rights to access content that they considered economically inaccessible:

[young people] feel we have a right to access those things and it's unfair when we don't have the money . . . We sort of feel we have the right to the same entertainment as people with more money.

If I had money to subscribe to things like Netflix, I would, but I don't, and therefore [I stream content].

Again, participants couched their claims in terms of rights of equal access to content, in this case the same rights as digital citizens with more economic capital. However, several argued

that accessing content without paying was a temporary situation linked to their current economic status:

if you just give people the opportunity to do it legally, they will. If it's legal and it's easy and it's free, people do it. Like Spotify, for instance. I think as soon as Spotify came out, I would love to see the data of the amount of illegally downloaded music, how much it dropped. Because I know I don't do it anymore because I can just listen to it all on Spotify.

For participants faced with geographic or economic exclusion, streaming and downloading are justifiable practices in order to gain access to content. Nonetheless, while some participants had changed their practices once content was easily accessible, research by technology company, MUSO, has shown that 'illegal' access often continues even when other means of access are available (Silva, 2018, March 22). This would suggest that once practices become normalised, they are unlikely to change unless some further actions lead the individual to adopt new ways of being. In other words, if the individual's digital citizen habitus does not conform to the 'ideal', their digital citizenship practices are likely to continue to be nonconforming.

The way participants in my study explained and justified their digital practices was not unusual compared with those deemed by copyright owners to be involved in 'digital piracy' (Urbonavicius, Dikcius, Adomaviciute, & Urbonavicius, 2018). Commonly, streaming and downloading is justified by many people as 'not that immoral', as lacking an identifiable victim, as sampling before buying, or as a necessity due to access restrictions (Bonner & O'Higgins, 2010; Brown, 2014; Urbonavicius et al., 2018). Yet considering participants' practices only in terms of digital piracy ignores the way these young people are responding to the social norms of their context. Through their explanations and meaning-making, these young people were engaging in acts of citizenship (Isin & Ruppert, 2015). They were claiming rights to equal access and engaging in acts that use digitally-mediated spaces as spaces of participation, sharing and knowledge co-creation through prosumption. They made their rights claims both through speech acts, explaining their reasoning, and through their digital practices. In that sense, it is possible to understand these young people's actions as embodying digital citizenship.

### 8.3.2 Supporting political and social action

Using digitally-mediated spaces for political and social action would usually be considered an acceptable embodiment of digital citizenship. However, digitally-mediated spaces can be used for social action in ways that are often not sanctioned by authorities, as one participant mentioned. This participant admired the activist group, *Anonymous*<sup>15</sup>, and supported the way the group engaged in political and social activism in digitally-mediated spaces: “They go in and close down websites, and they hack stuff. Like I think that’s a cool part of the internet that people can try and fix society. . . but then they’re labelled as terrorists or hackers”. This participant viewed *Anonymous* as a form of citizen-directed political and social action that challenged and subverted nation-state and corporate interests in a bid to ‘fix’ society. Furthermore, they saw *Anonymous* as a sort of digital ‘Robin Hood’, an example of the way digitally-mediated spaces supported the actions of citizens helping citizens:

I think it’s kind of awesome that the internet allows that as well . . . it’s a cool society to have no leader, but yet everybody’s in control which is almost like a kind of socialist, anarchist kind of thing, which is awesome.

This participant constructed *Anonymous* as an example of a community of digital citizens using the affordances of the internet to bring about political and social action, often at the behest of other digital citizens:

you can like write to them being like ‘there are problems within this, and I want you to look at it’ . . . but they’re not stupid. They won’t just go into someone’s IP address and muddle it up . . . they look at proper issues and other things.

Yet, as this participant admitted, not everyone would agree with the assessment that the *Anonymous* community worked for the social good: “it is kind of dependent on your viewpoint”. Nonetheless, for this participant, supporting the actions taken by *Anonymous* was a way to embody their habitus as a citizen working for societal good.

Claiming a connection, no matter how tenuous, to political action groups such as *Anonymous*, is one method for digital citizens to engage in forms of citizen resistance and

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<sup>15</sup> *Anonymous* is a leaderless international group of hackers and internet users that supports social and political justice (see Section 3.3).

embody a political habitus. In doing so, they can engage in acts of citizenship (Isin & Ruppert, 2015) that push social boundaries (Cornwall, 2002; Dahlgren, 2005) and challenge notions of “what counts as politics” (Isin & Ruppert, 2015, p. 167). As digital citizens make meaning of their, and others’, actions, they open possibilities to embody new political ways of being and doing. Openly supporting *Anonymous* in the interview allowed this participant to embody a political habitus by aligning themselves with a citizen-directed community that engaged in digitally-mediated political and social action.

## 8.4 Summary

How young people embody and claim digital citizen habitus is shaped by their understanding of what it means to be and do digital citizenship. The young people in this study re-produced discursive constructions of citizenship as requiring a participatory habitus. They understood that to be a digital citizen is to do digital citizen practices, such as participating in political discussions, engaging in social and political action, maintaining social connections, maintaining social norms by challenging inappropriate behaviours online, prosuming content, engaging in education, seeking information, and participating economically. Furthermore, through doing digital citizenship, people bring into being their digital citizen habitus (Isin & Ruppert, 2015). Through their claims, or denials, of being a digital citizen and their digitally-mediated citizenship practices, these young people enacted their definitions of what it means to be and do digital citizen.

Commonly, being and doing digital citizen was constructed as participating in digitally-mediated spaces. Individual participants, however, varied in how often they felt that participation should occur, and what form their participation should take. Yet these variations did not negate common themes of participation and ways of doing that at times challenged and/or re-presented discursive constructions of young people’s online participation and use of digitally-mediated spaces. For the young people in this study, digitally-mediated spaces provided opportunities to participate in spaces where they felt comfortable (Beals & Wood, 2012; boyd, 2014; Harris et al., 2007). Using digitally-mediated spaces, these young people could challenge discursive constructions of youth (non-)participation and construct alternative ways of being and doing.

The embodied habitus is the individual’s habitus made explicit through practices. Yet the everyday moments of citizenship through which individual habitus is embodied may

go unrecognised (MacKian, 1995; B. E. Wood, 2012). Small interactions, such as supporting a friend, may seem like trivial, everyday moments to young people, but are the practices through which a sense of shared habitus and belongingness to community is developed. For the most part, the young people in this study integrated the use of digital technologies into their everyday lives and normalised their participation in digitally-mediated spaces. They participated, they engaged, they connected, they prosumed, and they sought information. They embodied individual and shared habitus through their social practices and interactions (Baars, 2017).

When the individual and shared habitus of a community are not shared by the wider society, new ways of being and doing can be brought into practice. ‘Alternative’ ways of doing digital citizenship may reflect a particular community’s shared habitus but conflict with a nation-state’s prescribed ways of doing digital citizenship. As participants make meaning of their lived experiences, their practices may challenge dominant constructions of what is acceptable. The young people in this study offered counter-discourses that constructed their digitally-mediated practices, such as streaming/downloading pirated content, as conforming to the social norms of their community. They challenged dominant constructions around rights to access content and embodied their digital citizenship through their participatory practices in digitally-mediated spaces. In doing so, they claimed rights to have new ways of being and doing digital citizen acknowledged.



## Chapter 9: Conclusion

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I began this research with the purpose of exploring how meaningful the concept of ‘digital citizenship’ was to young people. I conclude with the answer that it depends. It depends upon how we construct and define ‘digital citizenship’; it depends upon how we understand young people and their participation in digital spaces; and ultimately, it depends upon how we understand and construct ‘citizenship’.

In this thesis, I contend that digital citizenship is more nuanced than normative definitions would allow. It is a messy and complex concept that is constructed as young people make-meaning of their lived experiences. Discussions of digital citizenship require a common vocabulary of citizenship, a shared understanding, which definitions can provide. Nonetheless, as argued in this thesis, definitions of (digital) citizenship are problematic, located in relations of power over who decides the criteria, and potentially exclusionary and/or alienating for those who deem the criteria irrelevant. I contend there is a need to consider young people’s perspectives on what it means to be and do digital citizen if the concept is to be relevant for young people.

As I noted in Chapter 1, numerous texts refer to citizenship as complex and contested (see for example, Bellamy, 2008; Clarke et al., 2014; Faulks, 2000; Heater, 2004). Similarly, digital citizenship is a messy and complex concept. In this thesis, I build upon, and contribute to, a growing body of work exploring the concept of digital citizenship. Much of the literature around digital citizenship explores the role of citizens in digitally-mediated spaces and seeks to define digital citizenship in terms of access, participation and usage patterns, ‘appropriate’ behaviours, attitudes and values, and/or as a set of normative elements (see Chapter 3). However, in this study, I explored the concept of digital citizenship directly with young adults to show the ways young New Zealanders are making sense of their lived experiences and constructing understandings of ways of being and doing citizenship in a digital age.

To explore digital citizenship with young people, I utilised Netsafe’s definition of digital citizenship for New Zealand schools, sanctioned by the Ministry of Education. I noted that normative definitions of digital citizenship used by educators imply digital citizenship is an ideal goal, an aspirational status for young people to achieve. Yet I found that young

people, through their practices, disputed normative claims about digital citizenship and embodied their (digital) citizenship<sup>16</sup> in diverse ways. As Isin and Ruppert (2015) argue,

the kinds of citizen subjects cyberspace cultivates are not homogenous and universal, but fragmented, multiple, and agonistic. At the same time, the figure of a citizen yet to come is not inevitable; while cyberspace is a fragile and precarious space, it also affords openings, moments when thinking, speaking, and acting differently become possible by challenging and resignifying its conventions (pp. 13-14).

The multiple ways the young people in this study understood what it means to be and do (digital) citizenship reflects how digital citizenship is not a homogenous way of being. Instead, the multiple discourses that shape understandings of (digital) citizenship, of digital spaces, and of young people, open possibilities for new ways of being, and doing, digital citizenship. I argue therefore that we should be wary of constructing digital citizenship as an aspirational goal, but rather should envisage digital citizenship as a fluid process of constant re-imagining and reinvention (Clarke et al., 2014, p. 171).

In this final chapter, I begin by addressing the research questions that guided me throughout this thesis (see Section 9.1). I next turn my attention to the implications of how we might make digital citizenship more meaningful for young people, and the contributions that this research has made to academic studies of digital citizenship (see Section 9.2 and Section 9.3 respectively). I acknowledge the limitations of the research and offer suggestions for further research in Section 9.4. Finally, I consider the future and where to now for young people and wider society in an age of digitally-mediated lives (Section 9.5).

## **9.1 How Meaningful is the Concept of Digital Citizenship?**

This thesis set out to explore how meaningful the concept of digital citizenship was to young people. To that end, a series of research sub-questions were proposed in Chapter 1 (see also Chapter 4) and are reproduced in this chapter in Table 9-1. The purpose was to establish how young people, on the cusp of or in their early years of formal citizenship engagement,

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<sup>16</sup> I explained the distinction between citizenship, digital citizenship, and (digital) citizenship in Chapter 2. Specifically, I use (digital) citizenship to refer to citizenship habitus and practices that cross the mediums of citizenship and digital citizenship.

understood the concept of citizenship and digital citizenship, how that related to their sense of belonging and connectedness, and how their meaning-making of what it meant to be and do digital citizenship related to their digitally-mediated practices. To comprehend how young people make meaning of their lived experiences and the concept of digital citizenship, I followed the advice of Kvale (1996) and adopted a qualitative approach encompassing focus groups and interviews. I adopted a multiple-focus theoretical lens (Willig, 2017), incorporating poststructuralist concepts of discourses (Foucault, 1972, 2002), Bourdieusian analysis of habitus and capital (Bourdieu, 1977; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), interrelational notions of place and space (Massey, 2005), and understandings of digital citizenship as digitally-mediated citizenship (see Chapter 2). These multiple theoretical concepts enabled me to examine and unpack the richness and complexity of digital citizenship.

**Table 9-1** *Relating the Research Questions to the Findings*

<b>Core Research Question:</b> How meaningful is the concept of ‘digital citizenship’ to young people?	
<b>Sub-Questions</b>	<b>Key Findings</b>
1. How do young people understand ‘digital citizenship’?	} Chapter 6
2. How do young people understand ‘citizenship’?	
3. How meaningful is the definition of the New Zealand ‘digital citizen’ to young people?	Chapter 5
4. Where do young people feel belonging and/or engaged with communities?	Chapter 7
5. How do young people feel their digital practices reflect the concept of digital citizenship?	Chapter 8

Throughout the analysis, I drew upon Foucault’s (1972) concept of discourses to unpack the discursive formations of citizenship. I paid attention to the underlying discursive constructions that shape understandings of citizenship as a variable concept and construct digital citizenship through practices such as the use of digital technologies. Discourses make possible multiple ways of being and doing citizen. For instance, young people’s ways of being and doing citizen are shaped by their meaning-making of competing discourses that position them as agentic individuals with citizen rights and responsibilities, yet simultaneously position them as ‘becoming’ citizens transitioning to citizenship. Being and

doing (digital) citizenship therefore happens through, and in relation to, social constructs of what it means to be and do citizen.

To further analyse the relational aspects of citizenship, I drew upon Bourdieu's (Bourdieu, 1977; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) concepts of habitus and capital to understand citizenship practices. For the young people in this study, a digital citizenship habitus reflected learned ways of being a digital citizen that shaped, and were shaped through, making meaning of multiple discourses and lived experiences. Furthermore, an individual's digital citizenship habitus is shaped by their available digital capital. To be a digital citizen and to enact a digital citizen habitus through citizenship practices, an individual must possess digital capital, such as the economic and cultural capital needed to access and utilise digital technologies and digitally-mediated spaces.

Woven throughout my analysis was an understanding of digital spaces as digitally-mediated interrelational spaces. Digital technology is a tool that enables access to interrelational spaces of shared meaning-making and purpose (Mossberger, Tolbert, McNeal, et al., 2008; Oyedemi, 2012; Servaes, 2003). As spaces become imbued with shared understandings of ways of being and doing, they represent spaces of shared habitus. When a shared habitus is similar to an individual's habitus, it contributes to their sense of belonging and connectedness, which then underpins notions of community. In what follows, I summarise my key findings.

In Chapter 5, I explored how meaningful the definition of digital citizenship was to young people, and their reactions and thoughts on defining the concept of digital citizenship. Analysing the definition provided by Netsafe and the Ministry of Education highlighted that the 'ideal' way of being and doing digital citizen draws upon discourses of the participatory citizen. Netsafe's definition constructs digital citizenship as an aspirational status, or capital, that is implicitly exclusionary and that serves to legitimise the nation-state's authority to define who does and does not belong in digitally-mediated spaces. The young people in this study pushed back against the definition, variously describing it as ambiguous, subjective, too prescriptive, and focussed upon the 'wrong aspects' of online practices. Instead, participants defined digital citizenship as, at the least, being present in digital spaces, but also as participating, contributing, and belonging to digitally-mediated communities. Digital citizenship was re-presented as habitus, or a way of being, that is embodied through participatory practices in digitally-mediated spaces, such as choosing which communities to

belong to, contributing to positive interactions, and as one young person in the study said, “being a decent person”. In doing so, this group of young people constructed digitally-mediated spaces as spaces of choice and agency in determining ways of being and doing.

In Chapter 6, I analysed the participants’ perceptions of the discourses that shaped their understanding of what it means to be and do citizen offline and online. The young people whose thoughts and voices are shared in this thesis highlighted the way discourses served to shape their meaning-making of what it means to be and do (digital) citizenship. I found that young people inhabit a murky discursive context where they are subject to mixed messages and competing discourses from parents, educators, and media regarding their ways of being and doing (digital) citizenship. Discourses of citizenship intersect with discourses constructing young people as competent agents or ‘becoming’ citizens, as well as with discourses around digital spaces and the use of digital technologies. As my analysis showed, digitally-mediated spaces are constructed as spaces of risk and/or opportunity. Discourses of risk fuel constructions of young digital citizens as vulnerable and in need of protection in digitally-mediated spaces, whilst discourses of opportunity fuel expectations that young people will participate in digital spaces. For the participants, what it meant to be and do (digital) citizen meant negotiating a frustrating discursive context where they were constructed as vulnerable young people and their digital practices as problematic, whilst simultaneously expected to participate in digital spaces, have digital skills, and adapt their digital practices to avoid risk. As the young people in this study fluidly navigated competing discourses, they made meaning of their lived experiences in ways that reflected, and shaped, their (digital) citizen habitus and their understanding of what it meant to be and do citizen and digital citizen.

In Chapter 7, I focussed upon the way (digital) citizenship is relational, located in places and spaces through a sense of belonging and connectedness. I argued that place and space located (digital) citizenship, whether offline or online, and provided meaning and context to experiences. In the context of (digital) citizenship, participants evoked belonging as a duality. They understood that belonging was comprised of the formal recognition of connection to a nation-state and/or online communities. However, participants also understood belonging as formed through shared ways of being and leading to an affective sense of connectedness and belongingness to places and spaces. My analysis showed that for many participants, belongingness formed through the interrelational spaces and

interactions with others in their online and offline communities. For the participants in this study, digital communities were often mediated extensions of their offline community spaces, meaning that the participants were already familiar with their communities' habitus and expected ways of being and doing (digital) citizen. However, digitally-mediated spaces offered participants the opportunity to seek new niche communities based on similar interests and ways of being and doing. Although connections that were solely digitally-based were perceived as potentially inauthentic, participants strengthened their belongingness by engaging in shared practices within their communities and thus representing the shared habitus. For the young people in this study, belongingness represented a shared understanding of ways of being and doing (digital) citizenship within a discursive context.

In Chapter 8, I discussed the way the young people in this study understood their digitally-mediated practices with regard to their understanding of digital citizenship. Whether or not young people identified as digital citizens was influenced by their understanding of what it meant to be and do digital citizen in digitally-mediated spaces. As my analysis showed, the young people in this study were “not homogenous and universal” digital citizens but instead held “fragmented, multiple, and agonistic” (Isin & Ruppert, 2015, pp. 13-14) views on what it meant to be and do digital citizen. They varied in their claims to be digital citizen, or not, with their decisions based upon their multiple nuanced understandings of what it means to be a digital citizen, and what it means to participate as digital citizen. They re-presented discursive constructions of citizenship as embodied through participatory practices even as they differed in their understanding of the frequency and type of participation required for digital citizenship. At times, different participants held contrary and agonistic views, such as around the nature of digital spaces, or whether the notion of digital citizenship was more than a technicality.

The young people in this study engaged in multiple digitally-mediated citizenship practices that made explicit their meaning-making around what it meant to be digital citizen. At times, participants' digitally-mediated practices challenged the 'ideal' notions of the New Zealand digital citizen. These young people made meaning of their practices by offering counter-discourses that re-constructed practices such as downloading pirated content as a way of supporting content creators. They reframed and re-presented their practices as different norms of social participation and claimed their right to be and do digital citizenship in ways that were meaningful to them. These were not citizens “yet to come” (Isin &

Ruppert, 2015, pp. 13-14), these were digital citizens taking advantage of new spaces of interaction offered by digital technologies to engage in social action, to push boundaries, to re-construct social norms, and to make rights claims.

Findings from this research support claims that digital citizenship is “many things to many people” (Vivienne et al., 2016, p. 15). Participants felt the normative definitions of digital citizenship as attitudes, behaviours, and skills of being a good citizen online (see Chapter 5) were subjective, broad and ambiguous with regard to their lived experiences. Yet, they still drew upon dominant discourses of citizenship to make meaning of what it meant to be and do digital citizen (Gilbert, 2004; Mutch, 2005, 2013), defining digital citizenship as digital access and presence, as participation, as prosumption, and as ways of being and doing. The findings, therefore, highlight the pervasiveness of discourses of ‘traditional’ citizenship, for example, as a status with associated rights and responsibilities and involving participatory practices (see for example, Faulks, 2000; Gilbert, 2004; Heater, 2004; Isin & Wood, 1999; Mutch, 2005, 2013). Importantly, the findings indicate that how young people understand digital citizenship is shaped by their understanding of what it means to be and do citizenship, which has implications for education as will be discussed in the next section.

This research underscores that, for most young people, citizenship and digital citizenship are not distinctly different ways of being, even if there are inherently different ways of doing citizenship practices using digital technologies. As such, this thesis echoes calls “for an end to digital dualisms” (Vivienne et al., 2016, p. 2; see also, Blanch, 2015; Robinson et al., 2015) that re-present digitally-mediated spaces as distinct and separate from the material world. Instead, digital citizenship practices should be understood as digitally-mediated citizenship practices that remain underpinned and shaped by understandings of what it means to be and do citizen (Blanch, 2015). If digital citizenship is to be made more meaningful for young people, I contend that ‘digital citizenship’ should therefore be conceptualised as ‘(digital) citizenship’.

## **9.2 Making ‘Digital Citizenship’ More Meaningful for Young People**

How do we make digital citizenship more meaningful? I began this chapter by noting ‘it depends’; it depends upon how we understand and construct citizenship, digital citizenship, and young people in digitally-mediated spaces. Digital citizenship is constructed as the

digitally-mediated practices that emanate from ways of being a citizen online. Yet citizenship is messy and complicated. Even as discourses of citizenship make particular ways of being and doing possible, for example by bestowing rights to belong, they also serve to limit possible ways of being and doing, for example by highlighting citizen responsibilities. Likewise, definitions of digital citizenship make possible some practices as acceptable but constrain others. In this section, I explain some of the implications of defining digital citizenship as well as ways to make concepts of what it means to be and do digital citizen more meaningful to young people.

### **9.2.1 Problematising how digital citizenship is defined in education**

This research highlights that young people's understanding of digital citizenship does not necessarily align with current academic or normative-based definitions of digital citizenship. Definitions of digital citizenship in the literature (see Chapter 3) are an attempt to pin down a slippery concept and provide a common vocabulary of digitally-mediated citizenship (Isin, 2009; Lister, 1998). Yet definitions can be problematic. Definitions construct digital citizenship as a form of managed citizenship (S. Coleman, 2008) by outlining expectations of citizenship practices. Definitions serve to construct citizenship as a capital, a status to be achieved through conforming to norms of citizenship (Asen, 2004; de Koning et al., 2015). However, the young people in this study tended to define digital citizenship as fluid and relational, as a way of being, located in communities, that shaped social practices and interactions with others in digitally-mediated interrelational spaces. There is, therefore, a gap between definitions that may be used in education about digital citizenship, and how young people understand the concept in relation to their lived experiences, which raises questions about who, and how, digital citizenship should be defined.

Problematising definitions of digital citizenship raises several questions. If adult-centric definitions are not deemed relevant by young people, what is the purpose of defining what it means to be and do digital citizen in digitally-mediated spaces? Importantly, who benefits by defining and educating for digital citizenship?

In the literature (see Chapters 2 and 3), defining and educating for citizenship is constructed as a way for nation-states to governmentalise citizenship and reinforce desired citizenship practices. Definitions of digital citizenship promoted by the Ministry of Education thus reflect nation-state sanctioned, adult-centric perceptions of ways of being a



digital citizen and what constitutes appropriate practices online. As such, digital citizenship education and definitions attempt to shape the individual habitus to match a desired shared habitus by socialising young people into particular ways of being and doing. However, definitions, including those that outline ‘acceptable’ digital citizenship practices, overlook the messy realities of young people’s lived (digital) citizenship practices that traverse online and offline spaces and result in the everyday moments of agency that represent acts of citizenship.

Fenster (2007) reminds us that “citizenship definitions are spatial” (p. 245), they dictate who is included or excluded and in which spaces. Definitions that construct digital citizenship in normative terms, and seem irrelevant to lived experiences, may serve to make some young people feel excluded (see Chapter 5) and may fuel acts of citizenship that do not meet the desired norms of practice (see Chapter 8). For instance, when adults construct digitally-mediated practices in ways that adhere to adult concerns, the reaction from young people may be one of resistance. In the research interviews, participants not only pushed back against elements of the definition I showed them (see Chapter 5), but also referred to disregarding the advice of speakers who came to their schools when it seemed to be irrelevant or unrealistic (see Section 6.4.3). Attempting to acculturate students to a shared societal habitus or way of being, challenges, but does not necessarily prevent, young people’s opportunities for individual agency and acts of citizenship, such as engaging in social action and maintaining social media communities against adult advice.

Defining what digital citizenship means and how, or whether, that meaning should be taught in schools is an issue embedded in power relations of who gets to define, why, and whose benefit it serves. While I have touched on aspects of these, the larger context of that issue is beyond the scope of this thesis. I noted with interest in Chapter 5 that, when shown the Netsafe definition, none of the participants questioned the authority of the Ministry of Education and/or Netsafe, to define and promote digital citizenship as it is constructed for New Zealand education, although they did question the details. This highlights that young people may be open to guidelines that help them understand ways of being online but may question what those guidelines advise. During the interviews, a range of participants in this study complained that they felt they had missed out on learning about participating online and would have liked more discussion at school. Many felt that schools and parents were overly focussed upon discourses of risk and emphasised cybersafety and security (see

Chapter 6). Participants' dismissal of advice they deemed irrelevant, such as advice to inform their parents of their practices or to avoid social media, show that it is important for educators to consider young people's lived realities when discussing digitally-mediated practices.

This thesis demonstrates the value of involving young people in the process of defining digital citizenship. By encouraging young people to talk and think about the concept of digital citizenship, this study acted as a discursive intervention for young people to challenge dominant discourses and assumptions and question their own practices. It is unclear whether the state-sanctioned definition of digital citizenship from Netsafe incorporated young people's perspectives, but the reactions of the participants in this thesis highlight the value in discussing and developing, rather than imposing, understandings of digital citizenship.

### **9.2.2 Recognising young people's perspectives**

The findings in this thesis offer insights into the way young people understand their digital citizenship as relational and involving practices in digitally-mediated interrelational spaces. This thesis also highlights that young people are not homogenous. Participants' ways of being and doing digital citizen were fluid and varied by context, such as the different communities to which they belonged. Thus, their understanding and vocabulary of what it meant to be a digital citizen also varied. Nevertheless, the participants tended to draw upon a shared understanding of the themes of citizenship as formal status, as belonging to a community, and as embodied through participatory practices, which they then further drew upon to define digital citizenship. Indeed, for many of these young people, even if ways of doing (digital) citizenship were shaped by place/space and technological tools, being a digital citizen online, and the dispositions that involved, was not that different to being a citizen offline. By implication, therefore, educating young people for digital citizenship is dependent upon the way young people are educated in, and understand what it means to be, a citizen.

Feedback from principals and teachers show that there are already inconsistent approaches to citizenship education due to educators' varying perceptions of what citizenship knowledge and skills young people need (Bolstad, 2012). Potentially, digital citizenship education may suffer the same inconsistencies for similar reasons. Complicating

matters is research that shows educators (along with parents) may be influenced by media-fuelled moral panics over young people's participation in digitally-mediated spaces and view young people's digital practices through a lens of risk (see Section 3.1.3). During the interview process, it was apparent that many of the young people in this study felt that discourses of risk did not align with their lived experiences. This is not to say that young people do not face risks online and do not need to know how to address privacy and security risks. However, there is a need to be reflexive about the assumptions and discourses driving approaches towards young people's digital practices. If educators want to keep young people engaged in discussions about ways of being and doing digital citizen, then care needs to be taken that young people do not feel alienated by the promotion of what they perceive to be irrelevant fears.

One way to ensure that conceptualisations of digital citizenship are relevant to young people is to encourage young people to discuss and co-construct what it means to be and do digital citizen. Historically, young people are often disempowered and constructed as 'becoming' citizens, expected to be responsible, but with limited rights (see Chapters 1 and 2). However, research shows that young people welcome opportunities to participate and contribute on matters that affect their lives (see Chapter 3), activities that reflect the often-unrecognised everyday moments of citizenship (MacKian, 1995; B. E. Wood, 2010). In other words, young people should be recognised as experts on their lived realities and education for digital citizenship should focus upon supporting and guiding young people's meaning-making of their lived experiences. As this thesis shows, creating spaces for young people to think about and discuss what it means to be a digital citizen encourages young people to participate in meaning-making, and to construct what it means to be and do citizen(ship) online in ways that are relevant to their lived experiences.

The ground shifts quickly in terms of available digital technologies and social media sites, and the affordances these offer. The rapid evolution of technological affordances underlines the need to focus upon digital citizen habitus or ways of being rather than upon specific practices. For instance, growing access to 'free' or subscription-based streaming services such as Spotify, Netflix, Lightbox, and Prime Video, means that young people frequently, and legally, have access to content that they might previously have streamed or downloaded in breach of copyright. Increasingly, these content services are available bundled with core digital services, such as internet and cell phone plans. Changing

availability of services is likely to shape young people's practices. The ever-shifting digital context that young people face highlights the importance of prioritising young people's meaning-making and ways of being in order to make digital citizenship relevant across multiple lived realities.

I note that, from 2020, the new Digital Technologies (DT) component of the New Zealand Curriculum is expected to be fully implemented in schools. The focus of Digital Technologies is upon the development of digital capital and habitus, articulated as "broad technological knowledge, practices and dispositions" (Ministry of Education, n.d.-c), with a view to prosumption of technology and the development of skills through "teaching children how to design their own digital solutions and become creators of, not just users of, digital technologies" (C. Hipkins, 2017, December 8). Although the curriculum area overtly focusses upon digital skill development, support material suggests that discussions with students would ideally incorporate topics such as what it meant to be a 'digital citizen', and the nature of the 'digital world' (Ministry of Education, n.d.-a). Such an approach appears similar to the focus group discussions I held for this study where we discussed what it meant to be a citizen and do citizenship online and offline.

In my research, participants said they valued the opportunity to consider what digital citizenship meant and share their opinions. Some reported that the focus group discussions had spurred ongoing conversations with peers and increased their awareness of their taken-for-granted online practices and digital spaces. For instance, several participants reported they had installed, or were about to install, security software. Others said they now considered the impact of their practices on others, although not all felt they would necessarily change the way they accessed content. Fairclough (2003) notes that "Texts as elements of social events have causal effects – i.e. they bring about changes. Most immediately, texts can bring about changes in our knowledge (we can learn things from them), our beliefs, our attitudes, values and so forth" (p. 8). In this study, the focus group interviews were spoken texts, co-produced through group discussion, that brought about changes in knowledge and changes in the ways that participants thought about themselves, their digital spaces, and their digitally-mediated practices. I argue, therefore, that meaningful discussions with young people, that consider their lived realities and practices in a non-judgmental manner, encourage young people to reflect upon their ways of being digital citizen and their digitally-mediated practices.

### 9.3 Contributions of the Research

This thesis makes a number of contributions to studies of digital citizenship. First, in Chapter 1, I stated that if education is to address digitally-mediated citizenship, there is a need to understand how young people construct citizenship and digital citizenship, and how they understand what it means to be and do (digital) citizen. This thesis sought to build upon previous work by providing empirical evidence around young people's understanding of what it means to be and do digital citizen. In doing so, this thesis addresses the gap left by conceptualisations of digital citizenship that lean towards the theoretical (Atif & Chou, 2018; Burridge, 2010; Couldry et al., 2014; de Moraes & de Andrade, 2015; Gibbs, 2010; Goggin, 2016; Isin & Ruppert, 2015; Isman & Gungoren, 2013; McCosker, 2015; Mossberger, Tolbert, et al., 2008b; Vivienne et al., 2016) and the prescriptive, often normative, definitions of 'appropriate' digital practices used in educational settings (Netsafe, 2012, 2015, September 16, n.d.-b, n.d.-c; Ribble, 2011; Ribble & Miller, 2013). Furthermore, too frequently the voices of young people are absent from discussions around citizenship and the use of digital technologies. To that end, in this thesis, I have privileged the voices of the young people involved in this research to contextualise the way young New Zealanders understand being and doing citizenship in a digital age. Through this study, I have provided empirical evidence of young people's meaning-making of their lived experiences and practices as based upon traditional understandings of citizenship and shaped by a discursive context that constructs young people as vulnerable, yet expected to participate, in digital spaces that are constructed as risky and/or spaces of opportunity. I have outlined how this meaning-making shapes young people's understanding of what it means to be and do digital citizen as requiring access and participation within communities of belonging.

Second, when I began my research, academic literature regarding 'digital citizenship' was dominated by the work of Mossberger, Tolbert, et al. (2008b) with its definition of digital citizenship as regular, effective participation online and the possession of digital capital in terms of skills. More mainstream, however, was the normative approach to digital citizenship offered by educator, Mike Ribble (Ribble, 2011, 2012, 2017; Ribble & Miller, 2013) which focussed upon appropriate and responsible behaviours in online spaces. Since this study began, further works discussing digital citizenship have been published that explore theoretical concepts (see for example, Isin & Ruppert, 2015) or rethink how people

are doing digital citizenship through the use of digital technologies (see for example, McCosker, Vivienne, & Johns, 2016; Musgrave, 2015). My study is different in that it explores the concept of digital citizenship directly with young people, thus extending previous work by providing the perspective of young people on what it means to be and do digital citizen. I have introduced the concept of digital citizenship to a group of young people and explored what digital citizenship means to them in terms of ways of being and doing and considering their lived experiences. In doing so, the interviews I held with participants acted as discursive interventions (Lentz, 2011) that challenged the power relations that position the nation-state and Netsafe, as a sanctioned agent of the state, as having the authority to define digital citizenship. The resulting discussions, where the young people in this study constructed digital citizenship, provided richer conceptualisations of digital citizenship and made visible the way young people's understanding and practice of digital citizenship is shaped by discourses of citizenship.

Third, talking to young people has allowed me to highlight the complexities in young people's meaning-making around concepts of citizenship and the use of digital technologies to enact citizenship practices. For instance, while most participants claimed they were digital citizens because they participated online, participation was understood in different ways (see Chapter 8) and no participants felt they met all the criteria of the Netsafe definition promoted by the Ministry of Education (see Chapter 5). Some were uncomfortable being labelled a digital citizen because they either felt their practices did not embody digital citizenship and/or perceived there were negative discourses associated with the term, such as being overly-reliant on technology (see Chapter 8). One participant rejected the concept of digital citizenship as perpetuating a dualistic divide between online and offline ways of being citizen. Furthermore, most of the young people in this study understood that digital citizenship involved enacting practices and behaving in particular ways in digitally-mediated spaces (see Chapters 5 & 8), or as several participants put it – being a digital citizen means 'don't be a dick' online. For these young people, being a digital citizen meant behaving appropriately, with respect and consideration for others. Nonetheless, as outlined in Section 8.3, what young people perceived to be inappropriate behaviours online may not correspond with authority-derived understandings that encompass legalistic concepts such as copyright protection and content ownership rights. The complexity of young people's meaning-making highlights issues that need to be considered when defining and educating for digital citizenship. I discuss this in more depth in the next section.

Fourth, I have shown that, even when young people have no recall of learning about digital citizenship, they draw upon their lived experiences and their understanding of what it means to be and do citizen to conceptualise and re-construct digital citizenship. As outlined in Chapter 6, the ways young people make meaning of the competing discourses they encounter shapes the way they understand citizenship and digital citizenship. This has implications for the way we discuss digital citizenship with young people. For instance, definition criteria, such as “being literate in the language, symbols, and texts of digital technologies”, managing “ICT challenges”, and fulfilling subjective expectations of participation and/or appropriate behaviour (Netsafe, 2015, September 16), may appear irrelevant or unachievable (see Chapter 5). Equally, a focus upon discourses of risk in technology use may in itself be risky. If a focus on discourses of risk leads to advice and recommended actions that young people dismiss as irrelevant to their lived experiences, then young people may be placed at further risk of negative consequences because they may be less likely to seek support if they do encounter a negative situation (see Section 6.4.3). My study suggests there is a need to reconsider the way we discuss young people’s use of digital technologies and concepts of digital citizenship. I return to this point in the next section.

Lastly, another feature of my study is that by adopting multiple theoretical lenses I pull together multiple theoretical strands to underscore the complexity of conceptualising digital citizenship. In Chapter 1, I noted that educating young people in digital citizenship means there is a need to recognise how young people understand what it means to be and do citizen in digitally-mediated spaces. The multiple theories, of discourses (Foucault, 1972, 2002), Bourdieusian notions of field, capital, and habitus (Bourdieu, 1977; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), notions of space and place (Massey, 2005), and understandings of citizenship (see for example, Dwyer, 2010; Faulks, 2000; D. K. Hart & Wright, 1998; Heater, 1999, 2004; Isin & Wood, 1999; T. H. Marshall, 1950; Mutch, 2005; Pocock, 1981) allowed me to employ multiple analytic approaches towards the data in order to more fully explore how young people understand digital citizenship (Willig, 2017). In this thesis, I have explored the discourses that shape how young people understand and re-present ways of being and doing citizenship online and offline. I have continued the expansion of Bourdieusian analysis into the realm of digital sociology and grounded the concepts of a digital citizenship habitus and digital capitals in empirical evidence as a way to understand digital citizenship. Using Bourdieu’s theory of practice, I have explored digital citizenship as a capital, from having recognised status as a citizen, to having recognised digital skills

that enable participation as a digital citizen. I have framed ways of being digital citizen as digital habitus that is embodied and re-presented through digital practices. Furthermore, by analysing the ways young people located their digital citizenship in places and spaces (see Chapter 7), I have highlighted how affective notions of belongingness shape the way people imagine themselves as digital citizens. Taken together, theoretical concepts of discourses, Bourdieusian understandings of ways of being and doing, interrelational spaces, and concepts of citizenship, have offered a nuanced lens that has provided a richer understanding of young people's use of digital technologies and how their digital practices reflect their way of being.

#### **9.4 Future Directions**

I referred, in Chapter 4, to the need for a reflexive approach to research. A reflexive approach allowed me to remain aware of my role as researcher in co-constructing knowledge and shaping the research process through my decisions, actions, and analysis. In that spirit, I reflect in this section on what might have been done differently in this study and future directions in research.

No research is without limitations or challenges. My first challenge arose during the recruitment phase when I was initially stymied by the difficulty of garnering support from a diverse range of schools to approach students. As a result, I struggled to gain adequate numbers of participants from diverse backgrounds and both participating schools were drawn from main urban centres. Ultimately, however, this challenge provided an opportunity to increase diversity by expanding the participant pool to include older tertiary students who came from a variety of schooling backgrounds, as well as participants from the community who were not engaged in study. The result was a diverse range of participants in terms of age, socioeconomic background, educational experience in New Zealand, and association with place. However, the recruited participants are not a culturally representative sample of the population and while around 17% of the individual interview participants identified as Māori, the majority of Māori participants were interviewed as part of the group from Kikorangi College (lower decile school). Future research that includes the views of a more ethnically diverse range of participants would provide richer data around the ways young people from diverse cultural backgrounds understand ways of being and doing citizenship and digital citizenship and potentially identify how cultural factors impact belonging and participation.



I also acknowledge that because I did not collect detailed information about the tertiary and community-based participants' educational backgrounds, I missed an opportunity to analyse the impact of specific educational settings upon understanding and to fully do justice to a Bourdieusian analysis. Bourdieu's theories are based within notions of class and social structures. Whilst it is possible to use school deciles as a proxy indicator of class for the participants from Kikorangi and Waiporoporo Colleges, ascertaining class is problematic for the Community and Tertiary participants without more demographic or background data. Technically, both groups' participants were low-income at the time of the study. However, some of these young people gave details that hint at the messiness of determining social class from income alone. For instance, in the Community group, while four of the six were unemployed and the other two were only in part-time employment, at least one was also undertaking tertiary study part-time and another was a recent tertiary graduate. For at least two Community group participants, family backgrounds would potentially contradict a status as lower-income with one participant indicating they had attended a higher-decile school, while another mentioned their parents had their own business. Bourdieu believed that "we must understand the educational and cultural factors that foster subjectivities and establish capital(s)" (Stahl, 2016, p. 1092) in order to better understand social class. I felt, therefore, that comparing the young people in this study in terms of class in the absence of more detailed demographic data was problematic. My findings therefore represent a snapshot in time of these young people's learned habitus and capital within their social context as determined through their disclosures in the interviews. An opportunity for future research exists to explore understandings of digital citizenship across a broader range of young people from a wider variety of cultural, educational and geographical settings and to collect detailed demographic data as well as data regarding educational backgrounds in order to explore young people's different experiences accessing and participating in digitally-mediated spaces. Such an undertaking would serve to further bring Bourdieu, and Bourdieusian analysis, into digital spaces.

I acknowledge that this is a relatively small, qualitative study of 28 young people and is not generalisable beyond this particular group of research participants. Nevertheless, Patton (1990) reminds us that even small qualitative research studies can offer "logical generalisations" (pp. 174-175) in the information gained. For instance, it is likely that the discourses around citizenship, digital spaces, and young people that shaped participants' views on digital citizenship will similarly shape other young people's understanding of

digital citizenship. We could, therefore, logically assume that the ways the young people in this study understood digital citizenship are not unique and similar understandings may be held by other young people. Likewise, the participants engaged in digital practices that represented everyday moments of citizenship, such as using digital technologies for socialising, seeking and sharing information, education purposes, and for social action. These practices reflect the way young people have been reported in a range of literature to use digital technologies (for example, see Blanch, 2013; boyd, 2014; boyd & Heer, 2006; Crowe & Bradford, 2006; Dahlgren & Olsson, 2007; C. Davies & Eynon, 2013; K. Davis, 2012; Livingstone, 2008; S. T. Stern, 2007). It would seem logical to assume patterns of behaviours may be generalised to some extent. Nonetheless, it would be interesting to compare the findings of this thesis with the findings of research using a larger sample base and drawn from a broader range of social contexts.

In a similar vein, this research represents a snapshot in time of participants' ways of being and doing digital citizen. Digital practices are shaped by meaning-making of lived experiences. Yet the digital environment continues to shift rapidly, with the affordances of digital spaces and social media constantly evolving. For instance, recent moves by nation-states to hold social media companies responsible for the sharing of offensive content through initiatives such as the Christchurch Call, are beginning to change how social media companies monitor and limit user prosumption and may change young people's experiences, their meaning-making, and ultimately their understanding of digital citizenship. Furthermore, each new website and/or application creates opportunities for new communities in digital spaces and potentially shapes new ways of being and doing. Given that digital citizen habitus, or ways of being a digital citizen, is shaped by meaning-making, I question whether it is possible to educate for a digital citizen habitus that does not take into account young people's lived experiences in an ever-changing digital environment. Nonetheless, as I argue above (see also Section 1.5), the ways the young people in this study understood digital citizenship are unlikely to be unique and similar understandings may be held by others. Underpinning the way these young people constructed digital citizenship was the concept of belonging to communities and participating. Although the spaces they belong to may change as technology changes, and the ways they participate may also evolve as technology evolves, young people are still participating and belonging to communities in digital spaces. The continuing promotion within the curriculum of prescriptive definitions and criteria for digital citizenship, such as the Netsafe definition, means there is a lingering

normative discourse around digital citizenship in New Zealand. It would be interesting to discuss changing digital contexts and practices with young people and follow them in a longitudinal study to explore how young people's understanding of what it means to be and do digital citizen evolves in response to their experiences of a changing digital environment.

A further opportunity for research exists in exploring how teachers understand digital citizenship and how this might shape discussions about digital citizenship, digital spaces, and digital practices, with young people. While this thesis focussed upon the views and perceptions of young people, I had heard anecdotally that some teachers were unfamiliar with the concept of digital citizenship. If correct, this has potential implications, not only for the way young people are educated as digital citizens, but also for the way educators approach young people's digitally-mediated citizenship practices. For instance, during the interview process, the participants reported how educators frequently delegitimised students' digital practices and focussed upon discourses of risk. This highlights a need to explore educators' own understandings of digital citizenship to sit alongside the developing awareness of young people's understanding to which this thesis contributes.

One of the strengths of this study is that conducting focus groups with participants before the interviews encouraged participants to unpack the unfamiliar concept of digital citizenship with peers and consider their own understanding. While these group discussions might have shaped some young people's individual interview responses, the focus group discussions provided a point of reference for the participants to position their views against others and allowed me to explore concepts in the interviews that I might not otherwise have considered. The multiple interview approach also instigated the beginning of a relationship with participants that may have shaped the way young people responded in the interviews. Taken with the 'new' focus upon Digital Technologies in the curriculum, I therefore suggest that teachers, who already have a relationship with students in their class, are ideally placed to conduct in-depth discussions and research with young people around what it means to be and do digital citizen. If published, such research would contribute to growing a base of knowledge about young New Zealanders' ways of being digital citizens.

## **9.5 Reimagining a Model of (Digital) Citizenship**

One way teachers might unpack the concept of (digital) citizenship with young people is by framing discussions around models of citizenship to provide a common vocabulary of

citizenship for discussions. Using models of citizenship, such as those outlined earlier in Table 2.1 (see Section 2.4.1), provides a range of ways to frame and understand citizenship. In proposing this early conceptualisation of a model of digital citizenship, it is not my intention to replace one form of prescriptive criteria with another. Instead, a model of citizenship opens spaces of possibility for discussion about what it means to be part of a community, to belong, to participate, and to be called a (digital) citizen. With that in mind, I revisit here Mutch's (2005) model of citizenship to reimagine citizenship in digital spaces and offer a model of digital citizenship that incorporates the way young people make meaning of their lived citizenship and their practices of digital citizenship.

**Table 2-2** *Reimagining a Model of Citizenship as a Model of Digital Citizenship*

<b>Mutch's Model of Citizenship (2005):</b>	<b>Model of (Digital) Citizenship</b>
Citizenship as Identity and Belonging. <i>Many identities and affiliations as a member of group(s); right to have rights.</i>	Digital Citizenship as Identity <i>Recognising self as a member and being recognised by others as a member of digital community</i>
	Digital Citizenship as Belonging <i>Affective - sense of belongingness and connectedness to digital places and spaces</i>
Citizenship as Participation. <i>Agency; everyday practices that develop connectedness.</i>	Digital Citizenship as Participation <i>Active participation; agency; everyday citizenship practices that develop connectedness - contributing, supporting, prosuming</i>
Citizenship as Public Practice. <i>Formal statutes, laws and processes, cultural norms.</i>	Digital Citizenship as Public Practice <i>Following website terms of use, community social norms</i>
	<b>Digital Citizenship as Active (Re)Construction</b> <i>Construction of 'new' social norms; acts of citizenship based on rights claims</i>
Citizenship as Democratic Ideal. <i>Participation in the democratic process.</i>	Digital Citizenship as Democratic Ideal <i>Formal and informal political participation and social action</i>
Citizenship as Status. <i>Membership of nation-state; passive; legal rights and responsibilities.</i>	Digital Citizenship as Status <i>Visible presence online; digital capital in terms of access (to internet, technology) and skills</i>

Drawing upon my findings from this research, as well as Mutch's model of citizenship, I propose seven ways to think about digital citizenship. The first six aspects follow Mutch's model of citizenship. Digital citizenship as *identity* continues to incorporate affiliations to communities and involves recognising oneself as a member of a community and being recognised as part of that community. As I did during the analysis phase, I continue to tease out belonging as a separate conceptualisation of (digital) citizenship in order to recognise the affective nature of being part of a community. Digital citizenship as *belonging*, therefore, refers to the affective aspect of connection to community that arises from a match between individual and collective habitus and that fosters a sense of belongingness and connectedness to places and interrelational spaces. Digital citizenship as *participation* recognises the everyday moments of citizenship that occur within community spaces, such as contributing to community through active interaction and prosumption or production and consumption of content, and offering support to others. Here it should be recognised that choosing to join an online community and remain a member may also be construed as a form of participation. Digital citizenship as the *democratic ideal* draws upon historical Western understandings of citizenship as engaged in the democratic process, either formally or informally. In digital spaces, this may involve seeking out information on the political process, engaging in political discussions, and upholding civil and human rights. Digital citizenship as *status* is about being present in digital spaces, about having the right to access digital spaces, and having the digital capital in terms of economic, cultural and educational capital to exercise that right.

Additionally, I posit a seventh and new framing of digital citizenship as *active (re)construction*. The purpose of this addition is to recognise that new norms and ways of being can be brought about through acts of citizenship that break with societal habitus. It is a category that recognises discursive interventions and embraces the way young people challenge dominant discourses and assumptions and frame their practices within concepts of citizenship. Recognising digital citizenship as encompassing active (re)construction challenges traditional power structures and recognises young people are navigating discursive contexts and power relations with parents, educators, media, and peers seeking to shape their ways of being and doing. In other words, digital citizenship as active (re)construction recognises young people are constructing and reconstructing ways of being digital citizens through their digital practices. As such, it is a category that will not sit easily alongside prescriptive definitions that seek to enforce a particular societal habitus or way of

being digital citizen. Nonetheless, incorporating a view of digital citizenship as active (re)construction provides space to weave in young people's understandings and lived experiences and to make the concept of digital citizenship meaningful for young people. I envision that this reimagined model might be used to provoke discussion with young people and encourage a deeper exploration of what their digital citizenship might look like within the context of their lived experience.

## 9.6 Final Thoughts

(Digital) citizenship is a complex concept. Whilst definitions of (digital) citizenship provide a common vocabulary of citizenship upon which to base discussions, definitions also construct an 'ideal' digital citizen habitus. By creating aspirational criteria that define acceptable behaviours and dispositions, definitions legitimise a particular societal habitus and seek to socialise young people into desired ways of being and doing (digital) citizenship. The young people in this study resisted 'ideal' constructions of the New Zealand 'digital citizen' habitus. They pushed back against defined criteria they perceived as ambiguous and subjective, and instead sought constructions of digital citizenship that recognised the messy realities of their lived experiences and practices.

As these young people made sense of their lived contexts, their understanding was shaped through competing discourses that construct young people as 'becoming' citizens, vulnerable to risk and in need of control and protection, yet subject to societal expectations of rights, responsibilities, and practices. In their meaning-making, they exercised agency, made rights claims, and sought to re-present their performances of digital citizenship as norms for their social context. They located their (digital) citizen habitus through belongingness and connections to place/space and community. They embodied their (digital) citizen habitus in ways that reflected their lived realities as well as the complex and fluid framework of digital citizenship. In other words, the young people in my study were agentic in positioning themselves in a multifaceted framework. At times, the young people in my study undermined what they said, for example about ownership of creative content, with what they reported doing, such as downloading of material. These contradictory moments highlight how lived lives are complicated and messy, as is (digital) citizenship.

I argue that (digital) citizenship is a broad concept: a fluid process of digitally-mediated citizenship practices, where (digital) citizens enact participatory practices

informed by everyday lived experiences. This has implications for the way we think about digital citizenship education. I contend that definitions of ‘digital citizenship’ that attempt to stipulate the ‘ideal digital citizen’ habitus are not meaningful to young people. Instead, (digital) citizenship education needs to enable young people’s meaning-making and recognise the complicated field of digitally-mediated spaces that young people inhabit. Rather than creating exclusionary and subjective criteria or treating digitally-mediated spaces as separate from offline spaces, it would be more useful for education programmes to take a broad youth-centric conceptualisation that enables young people to make sense of their lived experiences and opens opportunities to consider alternative conceptualisations of what counts as (digital) citizen.

(Digital) citizenship does not just happen. It must be constructed, re-presented, and embodied through the doing of citizenship practices. (Digital) citizenship is a process that evolves as understandings of what it means to be and do citizenship evolve, as the roles of citizen and nation-state authority are re-made within online and offline contexts, as understandings of citizen rights and responsibilities shift, and as societal and technological shifts lead to new ways of being and doing (digital) citizenship.

In this research, I recognise the value of young people’s agency to narrate their own understandings, experiences, and ways of being and doing digital citizen(ship) (Couldry, 2010; Johns & Rattani, 2016). By engaging in discussions directly with young people about digital citizenship, I have provided rich insights into young peoples’ understanding of what it means to be a digital citizen and to do digital citizenship. This thesis therefore builds upon and extends a growing body of literature that explores the concept of digital citizenship by drawing upon direct engagement with the experiences and perspectives of young people. Whilst my focus is upon exploring young New Zealanders’ understandings of digital citizenship, the concept of belonging to communities and participating in digitally-mediated spaces that traverse geographical boundaries is not unique to young New Zealanders. Similarly, the way these young people engaged in digital practices is not unique. Given that digital citizenship has been framed in similar normative ways across multiple contexts and that resources such as books and websites are promoted across multiple nation-states, the findings of this research offer insights for educators and a new way of approaching digital citizenship with students. My model of digital citizenship recognises young peoples’ perspectives and meaning-making of their lived experiences and provides a framing for

educators to open conversations with young people about what it means to be a citizen in digitally-mediated spaces. Involving young people's perspectives is important if models of digital citizenship are to be meaningful for young people with diverse citizen habitus and capitals (Glasser, 2019).

The young people in this study illustrated that ways of being and doing in digital spaces are shaped by discourses and underpinned by understandings of what it means to be a citizen offline. For these young people, digital citizenship was affective, relational and performative. It required being present in digital spaces, with the habitus and capitals to participate and contribute to communities of shared interests whilst fluidly navigating discursive contexts. The complexity of young people's lived experiences encompassed multiple ways of embodying digital citizenship, such as being active and engaged, present and represented, politically active, economically consuming, and being aware of the social norms for their communities and spaces of belonging. Nonetheless, for these young people, digital citizenship was not overly different to their offline citizenship, but instead could be understood as a digitally-mediated fluid and evolving process where digital practices are shaped by their habitus and digital capitals.

I began this thesis by reflecting that recent events in New Zealand have highlighted the role of social media in how people express ways of being citizen and their connection and belonging to places and spaces. Notionally, there is no government or body that controls the internet and the way people behave online, although through terms and conditions of use, individual sites retain the right to monitor and control the behaviours of community members. Until recently, there has been minimal incentive for websites to strictly curtail member practices. However, there is a growing move by nation-states, and individual users, to hold social media sites responsible for hosting the content prosued by their community members. For instant, recent initiatives such as The Christchurch Call, have prompted discussions around the monitoring and control of internet content by nation-states and websites (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2019; Science Media Centre, 2019, May 14) with nation-states threatening regulation and financial penalties for social media sites that do not remove offensive content promptly (Science Media Centre, 2019, May 14). Websites are therefore able to, and expected to, sanction and limit the participation of members who behave inappropriately online in the same way nation-states may sanction citizens' inappropriate behaviours offline. In the future, it is therefore going to be increasingly



important that people learn to be and do digital citizen(ship) in ways that are consistent with the communities they belong to online and offline. Young people will need to be educated for digital citizenship and taught about what it means to be a digital citizen, to belong to digitally-mediated communities, and to do digital citizenship practices that strengthen connections to their online and offline communities.

The question then remains as to how we make a concept of digital citizenship meaningful to young people. In answer, I return to a colloquialism used by many participants to define ways of being and doing digital citizen. In Dave's (Waiporoporo College) words, "we need a PC way of saying 'don't be a dick online'". For the young people in this study, not being 'a dick' was constructed as behaving in a responsible, caring, and respectful manner towards others online. While 'digital citizenship' may appear to be the 'politically correct' (PC) way of portraying these behaviours, if young people do not understand it as such, then digital citizenship remains a meaningless concept.

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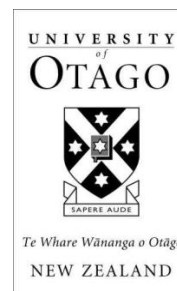
## Appendices

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### Appendix A: Letter to Principals and School Consent Form

Keely Blanch  
 PhD Candidate  
 University of Otago College of Education  
 145 Union Street East  
 P.O. Box 56  
 Dunedin 9054

29/5/2014



Kia Ora,

My name is Keely Blanch and I am currently a Doctoral Candidate at the University of Otago.

I am writing to enquire if your school would be prepared to allow me to talk to some of your senior students for my Doctoral thesis research project: *What does being a 'Digizen' mean?*

The project aims to explore how meaningful the concept of digital citizenship is for young people in New Zealand. I would like to talk to two groups of (approximately 6-8) young people about their understandings of what citizenship and digital citizenship entail. I am interested in where, how, and why, young people feel a sense of belonging and community, both offline and online. I am also interested in whether these students feel there are inconsistencies in the messages they receive about digital citizenship and any rights and responsibilities that may go along with being a digital citizen. As part of this project, we will discuss the Netsafe definition of Digital Citizenship used within the *Learn: Guide: Protect: Framework* and as part of the *e-Learning Planning Framework*.

If your school allows me to talk to the students, it will entail an initial brief talk to the relevant classes to garner interest during which I will hand out my contact details and collect names of those interested. I will be looking to create two groups: one group of students who can access the internet easily, and another group who may feel they face barriers to participating online the way they would like. I will then arrange to meet with each group of students for a focus group where we will discuss the concept of citizenship. I estimate this meeting will last about 90 minutes for each group. These meetings do not need to be held during school time, but for the comfort of the students, I would appreciate if your school would consider allowing us to use a classroom or other space after school has finished for the day if that is possible? As part of this meeting, I will discuss the details of the next phase, which is constructing individual 'My place, my space' interview prompts in their own time.

I will be asking the participating students to create interview prompts, using a method of their own choosing, to explain their individual feelings of citizenship, belonging, and sense of connectedness to society; and to explain their sense of connectedness and understandings of citizenship in digital/online spaces. These activities can involve as little, or as much work as they wish. For instance, students may choose to take photos of places they feel belonging, such as sports teams, cultural groups, church, home and so on. Or, they may choose to make a list of the ways they participate. The amount of time they spend on this activity is up to them and they will have a four to six week window to complete this. Preliminary indications are that this activity can be completed in less than an hour, although some students may wish to spend more time. I can provide disposable cameras if necessary, and cover the costs of printing photographs so as not to burden students.

I will then be holding individual interviews with each student to talk through their prompts, the ways they participate, and their feelings of belonging in their community. These interviews can be held outside of school hours so as not to affect valuable classroom time and will be arranged with each participant for their convenience. For those who are interested, I will offer the chance for a final group chat at the end of the project, to discuss whether the project led them to reconsider their views, and I will present my initial key findings. I am aware that NCEA poses deadlines and, if necessary, can arrange to complete the interviews after the exam period is finished to avoid placing more pressure on the students.

To ensure participants are not identifiable, I will only use pseudonyms for participants in any written findings and publications. Students may also choose the level of consent they wish to assign to any images in their individual projects and how I may use these projects in future publications.

The schools involved in this project will not be identified.

Participation in this project is voluntary and participants may withdraw at any time without disadvantage. The participants will receive a retail voucher after the individual interview as a 'thank you' for taking part in this project.

I am happy to speak to your Board of Trustees and staff about this research if you wish, and have attached copies of the participants' information sheet for your information.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me, or my supervisors. Our contact details are below. I appreciate you considering my request and will follow up this letter with a telephone call next week.

Yours Sincerely,  
Keely Blanch,  
(BA, PGDipArts (distinction), MA)  
University of Otago Doctoral Candidate  
Member of NZARE  
Member of NZ Ethics Committee

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**Assoc. Prof. Karen Nairn**  
(Supervisor)

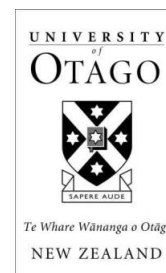
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*This study has been approved by the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research you may contact the Committee through the Human Ethics Committee Administrator, Gary Witte, (ph 03 479 8256 or email [gary.witte@otago.ac.nz](mailto:gary.witte@otago.ac.nz)). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated and you will be informed of the outcome. (Reference Number: 14/041 – APRIL 2014)*

[Reference Number 14/041 – April 2014]



## *What does being a ‘Digizen’ mean?*

### **SCHOOL ACCESS CONSENT FORM**

I have read the Information Sheet concerning this project and understand what it is about. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I am free to request further information at any stage.

I know that:-

1. Participation of students in the project is entirely voluntary;
2. Participants are free to withdraw from the project at any time without any disadvantage;
3. Any school or individual identifying information will be destroyed at the conclusion of the project, but any raw data on which the results of the project depend will be retained in secure storage for at least five years;
4. The participants will receive a retail voucher after their individual interview as a ‘thank you’ for taking part in this project;
5. The results of the project may be published and will be available in the University of Otago Library (Dunedin, New Zealand) but every attempt will be made to preserve participant and school anonymity. Publications may include journal articles, conferences and presentations, as well as the Doctoral thesis of Keely Blanch. Student participants can choose how their images will be used in any publications on the Image-use Consent Form.

On behalf of the school, I agree to your presence in the school in order to conduct the above research project.

.....

(Signature of Principal)

.....

(Date)

.....

(Printed Name)

*This study has been approved by the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research you may contact the Committee through the Human Ethics Committee Administrator, Gary Witte (ph 03 479 8256 or email gary.witte@otago.ac.nz). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated and you will be informed of the outcome. (Reference Number: 14/041 – APRIL 2014)*

## Appendix B: Recruitment Flyers and Sign-up Sheets for School and Tertiary Groups

# Where are your places and spaces?



**Do you spend a lot of time online?  
Or do you prefer to spend your time offline?  
What do you use the internet for?  
Where do you feel you belong?**



My PhD research at the University of Otago is looking at the concept of Digital Citizenship and the ways people participate in online and offline communities.

**If you are aged between 16 and 25**, I'd like to talk to you in a group chat (over pizza/snacks) about how you use the internet, how you understand citizenship, and what this might mean online.

I will then meet with you for a one-to-one interview a few weeks later.

You will receive a \$30 retail voucher at the end of the individual interview as a token of my appreciation.

**For more info, email: [keely.blanch@otago.ac.nz](mailto:keely.blanch@otago.ac.nz) or text 027 910 2761**







## Appendix D: Interview Questions

### Focus Group Guide

- Brainstorm concepts of citizenship.
  - What does it mean to be a citizen? of New Zealand?
  - How would you define 'citizenship' and being a citizen?
  - Are there particular ways of being or behaving that are expected of citizens? or that citizens can expect from others?
  - If belonging - Can you explain to me where/how you feel belonging?
  - And where/how do you feel connectedness? Types of communities? E.g. to family? Friends? School? Community? Country?
  
- Brainstorm concepts of digital citizenship.
  - Have you ever heard of the term digital citizenship?
  - Given our previous discussion, what do you think digital citizenship means?
  - How might you define digital citizenship?
  - Can people feel belonging/connectedness in online spaces? Perhaps in online communities?
  
- Introduce Netsafe definition of digital citizenship
  - Have you ever come across this as a definition before?
  - What do you think of it as a definition?
  - Would you agree/disagree?
  - What changes would you make and why?
  - Do you think these definitions of citizenship and digital citizenship apply to your life?
  
- Do you think there are overlaps/differences between being a citizen and being a Digizen, or digital citizenship?
  - How might people learn to be a citizen/digital citizen?

## **Interview Question Guide**

- When we discussed citizenship and digital citizenship in the earlier meetings, what resonated with you?
  - Was there anything you felt you could strongly identify with?
  - Did you disagree with any part of the definitions we talked about?
- How would you define a 'citizen'?
  - What do you think it means to be a citizen of New Zealand? (Rights/responsibilities/participation)
  - What do you think are the most important aspects? What counts as citizenship?
  - How would you show you are a citizen? (symbols/participating?)
- How would you define a 'digital citizen'? Is it the same? different?
  - What do you think are the most important aspects?
  - What shows other people you are a digital citizen?
- How do you feel the definitions of citizenship and digital citizenship (that we discussed as a group) apply to you and your life experiences?
  - What sort of places do you feel you belong offline?
  - How does that compare to places you might feel you belong online?
- How do you use the internet?
  - Do you feel you use the internet often?
  - What do you get from using the internet/websites?
- Would you call yourself a digital citizen? Why/Why not?
  - Does being/not being a 'Digizen' change how you are as a 'citizen'?
  - How might people use the internet to be a citizen?
- The concept of Digital citizenship assumes that people can get online –Is an online presence necessary? Why?
  - Do you think there are any barriers to getting online? How easy is it for you to get online?
  - Do you feel that affects your ability to be a digital citizen?
- Thinking back to your schooling – have you ever talked about digital citizenship in school? – it may not have been called that (e.g. cybersafety, cybersecurity, fair use...)
- What sort of messages do you get about using the internet as a young person? From school? parents? other places?
  - How do you think they fit with this concept of digital citizenship?
- Do you think this project and our discussions have changed how you think about the internet/ the way you use the internet?
  - Overall do you think you would change the way you use the internet in the next few years?

## Appendix E: Participant Information Sheets and Consent Forms

[Reference Number 14/041 – April 2014]



### ***What does being a 'Digizen' mean?*** **INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS**

**What is the project about?** I am interested in the way young people in New Zealand understand the concepts of digital citizenship and citizenship. I would like to talk to you about where, how, and why, you feel a sense of belonging and community, both offline and online. I am also interested in whether you feel there are inconsistencies in the messages you receive about digital citizenship and your internet use.

If you decide to participate in the project, I hope that you will find it interesting to reflect upon your experiences and have a chance to express your opinions about internet use by young people. By having your say, your opinions may help inform new definitions of digital citizenship, Ministry of Education policies and the way this topic is taught in schools. This project is part of the requirements for my PhD Thesis at the University of Otago College of Education, where I am a postgraduate student.

**Who can take part?** I'd like to talk to people aged between 16 and 25 years old.

**What will I be asked to do?** This project has two parts. Should you agree to take part in this project, you will be asked to take part in the following ways:

<p><b>Part 1:</b> <i>Focus group meeting</i> <b>(approx. 1 ½ hours)</b></p>	<p>We will have an informal chat, over pizza or snacks, to discuss the meaning of citizenship and digital citizenship. What does it mean to be a NZ citizen? Is it different to being online? What is a digital citizen?</p>
<p><b>Part 2:</b> <i>Individual interview</i> <b>(approx. 1 hour)</b></p>	<p>We will have a one-to-one conversation where we discuss your personal understanding of digital citizenship and the ways you feel you belong and participate, online and offline. As part of this, we will talk about how you use the internet.</p>

	<b><i>At the end of this interview, you will be offered a retail voucher to recognise your participation in the research.</i></b>
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The precise interview questions that will be asked have not been determined in advance, but will depend on the way in which the interview develops. Consequently, although the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee is aware of the general areas to be explored in the interview, the Committee has not been able to review the precise questions to be used. You do not have to answer any particular question if you do not want to do so.

You will be given a \$30 retail voucher of your choice (e.g. a Booksellers, or other voucher) at the end of the individual interview to recognise your participation in the project.

**What data or information will be collected and what use will be made of it?**

The focus group and interview will be audio-recorded and these will be used to type up a transcript of what has been said. If you wish, this transcript will be available for you to check and comment on before it is analysed and written up. To ensure you are not identifiable, only code names will be used in any written work and you may choose your own code name/pseudonym.

All information will be stored in password-protected digital files and/or locked filing cabinets. Only my supervisors and I will have access to the interview transcripts and copies of your activity. These will be retained in secure storage for at least 5 years. Any of your personal information (*such as contact details or audio recordings*) may be destroyed at the completion of the research even though the data derived from the research will, in most cases, be kept for much longer for me to use in publications and presentations.

The results of the project may be published and will be available in the University of Otago Library (Dunedin, New Zealand) but every attempt will be made to preserve your anonymity. While I will take all reasonable precautions, the security of electronically transmitted information cannot be guaranteed and I advise caution if sending sensitive material electronically.

Participation in this project is voluntary. You may decide to leave the project at any stage without any disadvantage to yourself.

**What if I have any questions?** If you have any questions about this project, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact us at the University of Otago College of Education:

Keely Blanch [keely.blanch@otago.ac.nz](mailto:keely.blanch@otago.ac.nz)  
(Student Researcher)

Phone (03) 479 5975  
Cellph. 027 910 2761

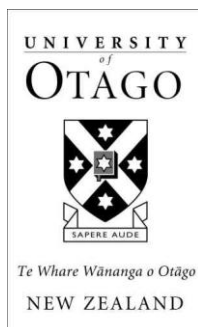
Dr Susan Sandretto [susan.sandretto@otago.ac.nz](mailto:susan.sandretto@otago.ac.nz)  
(Supervisor)

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Assoc. Prof. Karen Nairn [karen.nairn@otago.ac.nz](mailto:karen.nairn@otago.ac.nz) Phone (03) 479 8619  
(Supervisor)

University of Otago College of Education, 145 Union St East, P.O. Box 56,  
Dunedin.

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(Reference Number: 14/041 – APRIL 2014)*



## ***What does being a 'Digizen' mean?***

### **CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS**

I have read the Information Sheet concerning this project and understand what it is about. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I am free to request further information at any stage.

I know that:-

1. My participation in the project is entirely voluntary;
2. I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without any disadvantage;
3. This research project involves a focus group, which will be discussion-based, and an interview, which will use an open-questioning technique. The general line of questioning includes my understanding of digital citizenship, how I use the internet, and the way I participate in online and offline communities. The precise nature of the questions that will be asked have not been determined in advance, but will depend on the way in which the interview develops. If I feel uncomfortable with the line of questioning at any time, I may decline to answer any particular question(s) and/or withdraw from the project without any disadvantage of any kind.
4. Personal identifying information such as interview audio recordings will be destroyed at the conclusion of the project, but any raw data on which the results of the project depend will be retained in secure storage for at least five years;
5. I will receive a retail voucher after my individual interview as a 'thank you' for taking part in this project;
6. The results of the project may be published and will be available in the University of Otago Library (Dunedin, New Zealand) but every attempt will be made to preserve my anonymity. Publications may include journal



articles, conferences and presentations, as well as the Doctoral thesis of Keely Blanch.

I agree to take part in this project.

.....  
(Signature of participant)

.....  
(Date)

.....  
(Printed Name)

Email address: .....

Phone/Cellphone Number: .....

**Which ethnic group(s) do you belong to?**

New Zealand European

Māori

Samoan

Cook Island Māori

Tongan

Niuean

Chinese

Indian

Other (please state) .....  
(E.g. such as Dutch, Japanese, Tokelauan)

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**Appendix F: Places for Support Leaflet**

**Places  
you  
can go  
for  
help...**

## Places you can go for help –

Your school counsellor \_\_\_\_\_ can help you with many problems and can be contacted \_\_\_\_\_

But if you would like to talk to someone else you could contact one of the following services –

### Youthline

*Youthline provides a whole range of services designed for young people.*

There are heaps of ways to get in touch and involved with Youthline, whether it be for support if you are wanting to talk things over, or through our volunteering and development programmes.

Helpline 0800 37 66 33

Free TXT 234

Email/MSN [talk@youthline.co.nz](mailto:talk@youthline.co.nz)

Check us out on Facebook and Bebo!



### Ever feel you need someone to talk to?

Someone you can tell stuff to and not worry about getting into trouble?

**0800WHATSUP** is a free phone counselling service for anyone aged 5 to 18.

We're available from 12noon to midnight, seven days a week, every day of the year. We'll listen and help you solve your problems – and no problem is too big or too small, you can even just call us for a chat. The person you talk to isn't allowed to tell anyone what you say and you don't have to tell them anything you don't want to, not even your name.

If you want to talk to the same person again sometime, just ask. If the lines are busy when you ring, just try again in a bit!

### YouthLaw Tino Kāngatiratanga Taitamariki

is a community law centre for children and young people throughout Aotearoa/New Zealand. This site provides information about how the law can help you to overcome issues that may be affecting you.

<http://www.youthlaw.co.nz>

Phone **0800 UTHLAW**

## netsafe

Email us: [queries@netsafe.org.nz](mailto:queries@netsafe.org.nz)

Phone us: 0508 638 723

Sometimes interactions on the net can take a bad turn. If you're worried or uncomfortable about something, it's important to talk with someone you trust about it. Maybe you've run across some images that were upsetting. Maybe you gave personal information out to someone who is starting to get pushy with you. Maybe you are spending most of your waking hours online and can't seem to stop yourself, or perhaps you are worried about a friend's online actions.

You can give us a call for free on 0508 NETSAFE. If you don't feel you can talk to your parent or caregiver, and you are at school, there may be a teacher or counsellor there you can talk to, or a local group you can call that supports young people. You are not alone, and help is available.

Don't forget you can also get help from the **NZ Police** if you feel unsafe either online or offline.

You can also contact me:

Keely Blanch

Phone (03) 4795975