



# The COMMITTED

• Journal of Turkish Education Association Schools • Issue 11/JUNE 2022



**DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP**

## The CommitTED

### Ownership

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Türk Eğitim Derneği (TED) İktisadi İşletmesi  
Taşpınar Mah. 2800. Cad. No: 5  
İncek / Gölbaşı / ANKARA  
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www.tedisletme.com.tr

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### Type

Periodical

### Frequency of Publication

Annual

### Language

English, German, French

### Date and Place of Publication

June 2022, ANKARA

### Design

ZETA Tasarım ve Dış Ticaret Ltd. Şti.  
Cinnah Cad. Aziziye Mah. No: 44 / 6 Çankaya / ANKARA  
Tel: 0 312 466 86 96 info@zetatasarim.com.tr  
www.zetatasarim.com.tr

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# Promoting And Protecting Human Rights, Democracy, And The Rule Of Law In Cyberspace

Eylül DİNLER

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We have interviewed Assoc. Prof. Veysel Dinler who gives lectures on human rights at Hitit University. The lecturer shared valuable information on human rights, democracy and the rule of law in cyberspace.

## 1. As a lecturer on human rights, what can you say about protecting human rights in cyberspaces?

The protection of human rights in cyberspace has advantages and disadvantages compared to real life. Since people do not have physical contact, criminals cannot violate rights through physical contact and violence; these rights are more protectable in cyberspace. On the other hand, lack of physical contact causes people who do not know each other to behave more rudely towards others. Crimes such as insults, harassment, access to private information are easier. Criminal minds can steal people's photos, texts, and other confidential data and hack their cyber profiles.

## 2. Do you think it is possible to protect human rights in cyberspaces? If yes, how?

The most crucial benefit of cyberspace in protecting human rights is enriching sensitivity to human rights. Cyberspace enables rights defenders to reach millions of people simultaneously without direct

physical contact. The excellent organizing power in cyberspace is essential to raise awareness of human rights and publicize human rights violations.

## 3. As someone who has worked on electoral systems, how do you think democracy can be adapted to cyber environments?

Well, cyberspace is an excellent opportunity for direct democracy. Representative democracy was born when individuals delegated their decision-making and law-making authority to representatives. The increasing population of the countries did not allow people to come together and reach a collective decision making. Today, the Internet and computer technology are highly convenient for analyzing billions of data. It almost means a transition to direct democracy. In this case, the most critical issue that we should not ignore is that people do not have enough opportunities to use computer technology. At the same time, the confidentiality of personal data is still ambiguous.

## 4. Could you give an example of how democracy can be used in cyberspaces?

When representative democracy emerged, it was considered a majority's victory at the ballot box. However, today the







understanding of democracy has changed a lot. Democracy is not just about ballot boxes. People do not have the patience to wait for the next elections. Now, governments' decisions are under the surveillance and control of citizens thanks to cyberspace. We can now participate more in decision-making processes by using cyberspace. Democracy should now be synonymous with "participation" rather than the ballot box. Cyberspace is a virtual environment for holding a referendum on many issues, taking public opinion, and organizing campaigns.

**5. Does the cyber environment affect the functionality of democracy? If yes, how does it affect it?**

The cyber environment has many possibilities for promoting democracy. The mechanisms of expressing opinions and protests, and the ease of organization provided by the Internet will make significant contributions

to the development of democracy. However, the virtual world also brings a disadvantage. The danger of being disconnected from reality can also cause democracy to be stuck only in the virtual world.

**6. Lastly, can the rule of law be maintained in cyberspaces? How is it possible?**

Cyberspace provides significant advantages in terms of transparency and accountability. With e-government services, people can follow the politicians and rulers more easily. People can use their freedom to claim their rights more easily with internet facilities. Mainly the power of the media comes into play. On the other hand, there have been cases where social media has negatively affected courts recently. There is a delicate balance to maintain the rule of law, and it is necessary to maintain this balance.

