

THE CONFLUENCE OF DIGITAL LITERACY AND DIGITAL ETHICS IN
YOUNG ADULT LITERATURE FOR THE
SECONDARY ENGLISH CLASSROOM: WHERE ARE WE NOW?

by

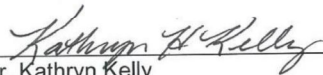
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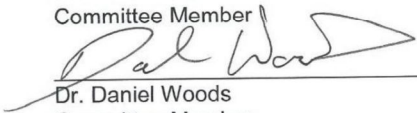
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Abstract

Teaching young adult literature in the secondary English classroom with a focus on digital literacy and digital ethics is more necessary than ever in the age of digital communication. Adolescents are often on a device or online interacting for much of their day and doing so often without adult supervision or guidance. Due to potential limitations in user exposure or knowledge of digital worlds for both teachers and students, educators can utilize young adult literature with a digital focus to instruct on the positive and negative aspects of interacting with digital devices and media today. According to Hayn and Kaplan from their text *Teaching Young Literature Today*, they believe, “In an education climate of accountability, standards, benchmarks, and high-stakes testing, combining contemporary YAL and technology provides an innovative and engaging way to teach curriculum standards” (225). By selecting young adult literature titles in this thesis for classroom reading and instruction which not only address curriculum goals but have a digital focus, secondary English language arts teachers can guide adolescents using young adult literature that is relevant and useful to their digital realities as they evaluate their digital device and media experiences.

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Dedication

To My Daughters

"I am Instagram because... social." (Belle, 14)

"I live my life on Tumblr, Mom." (Tori, 16)

JSYK u 2 r the reason (: <3

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Chapter 1. Introduction and History of Teaching Young Adult Literature in the Secondary ELA Classroom: Remember Where ‘Ya’/YA Came From

It is perhaps difficult to imagine there was a time when young adult literature was not recognized as a genre of literature, and definitely not as a consideration for inclusion in the pedagogy of the English language arts (ELA) classroom. It is likewise difficult for someone in 2016 to appreciate the enormity and influence of Louis Rosenblatt’s “transactional theory ... that ‘meaning’ does not reside ready-made ‘in’ the text or ‘in’ the reader but happens or comes into being during the transaction between reader and text” (Rosenblatt 7), as it pertains to the education of youth. From her collection of selected essays in “Toward a Cultural Approach to Literature” from a 1946 *College English Journal* article, Rosenblatt expands on a caution by President Roosevelt “that ‘if civilization is to survive we must cultivate the science of human relationships’” (51) and so “[i]maginative sharing of human experience through literature can thus be an emotionally cogent means of insight into human differences as part of a basic human unity” (53). Logically then, “Classrooms that enable students to engage with YAL through the use of technology are meeting the needs of the twenty-first-century global citizen, as well as meeting curriculum standards” (Hayn and Kaplan 4). Though using classic literature in the classroom and assuring students have a background in the foundations of what is approved canon is valuable, society has changed significantly in recent years and young adult literature must, therefore, have a place as legitimate literature within the classroom, especially when the literature content has a digital focus.

In what could be considered an essential read for any secondary English language arts teacher, Michael Cart’s text *Young Adult Literature: From Romance to Realism*, the

author unfolds a comprehensive history of the political and social influences on how young adults as an age group came to be. Cart, well-known as an expert in YA literature, emphasizes, “Indeed, until World War II, the term young adult—like its apparent synonym teenager—was scarcely used at all,” and goes on to say, “the idea that this space constituted a separate and distinct part of the evolution from childhood to adulthood was still foreign” (*YA Lit* 3). In fact, it seems that young adults weren’t really transitioned into their own category until businesses realized the potential “market” they represented, first in 1936 with Little, Brown risking the publishing of the story “Sue Barton Student Nurse” (Cart, *Young* 9) on to “the new girls’ magazine *Seventeen* in September 1944” (12) into the “late forties and early fifties [which] produced another wildly popular genre for boys... [s]cience fiction” (19).

Cart, in his chapter on the sixties and seventies, asks, “Would ... teens have been more enthusiastic about reading if they had been permitted to self-select their books?” (22). Unfortunately, as Cart admits, “The problem, of course, was that even if teachers had been inclined to use young adult books in the classroom instead of the old has-beens, it’s obvious ... that few works of young adult literature before 1960 would have qualified as literature” (22). Finally, however, with the addition of S. E. Hinton’s *The Outsiders* young adult readers had “‘real’ characters ... thematic relevance ... as a tool to define the daily lives of her characters ... and this use was groundbreaking and consistent with the demands of the realistic novel” (27). By the 1970s, the path was laid for such memorable and engaging writers as Robert Cormier, Judy Blume, Lois Duncan, and Walter Dean Myers, which Cart labels the writers of the 70s “as the first golden age of young adult literature” (31) which could be used in the classroom.

On then to the twenty-first century when such blockbusters as the Harry Potter series and “the jaw-dropping success of the fantasy field” (96) brought with it a revival in “family reading . . . and demonstrated that given something they actually want to read, boys would embrace books as enthusiastically as girls” (98). It almost feels redundant here to mention the perhaps inevitable slide into the “romance and horror fiction” world of Stephenie Meyer’s successful Twilight series for which Meyer admits to “Associated Press reporter Hillel Italie” in an interview all who follow J.K. Rowling will “owe her so much” because “she got publishers to believe that people would pick up an 800-page book” adding that ““she got kids reading’ and she got adults reading” (qtd. in Cart 99). The beauty of this reading and purchasing phenomenon in popular culture was that not only were adolescents reading and talking about what they were reading, they could talk with adults, too. It has to be mentioned that this union of financial, critical, and fandom success may have broken the barrier that young adult fiction had faced for so long: no adult appeal. An asset here was that educators could communicate with adolescents by capitalizing on the popularity of the genre by selecting and teaching with young adult literature that has specific intent – digital literacy or digital ethics, for example.

In a 2013 qualitative study focusing on the processes and outcomes of an instructional focus on engaged reading published in *Reading Research Quarterly*, researchers Ivey and Johnson conduct research to determine, first, ““What do students perceive to be the outcomes of engaged reading of young adult literature?”” and second, ““What do students perceive to be the causal processes of engaged reading?”” (260). The study showed through assigning many, but carefully selected, choice novels for classroom discussion, students felt in their own words that, “Before this year, we kind of

had to read books they assigned to us, so I'd pretend to read it, and I just wouldn't care about books at all. But now they give us a choice if we want to read it, where we get to pick the book that we read. I actually read it instead of pretending to read it" (Ivey and Johnson 261). Also students who are "given opportunities to select personally meaningful young adult literature, autonomy in their use of that material, and time to read will readily become engaged in reading" (Ivey and Johnson 258). Again, if educators participate in the conversation with students on what they like to read, and include adolescent titles with a digital focus within the classroom, there is much available to also guide adolescent development while navigating digital age challenges.

On considering the possibility of why YA literature has not before been as widely used or gained the credibility it may deserve, Ivey and Johnson suggest, "Perhaps the failure of research to provide these insights is due to the absence of personally relevant texts in secondary English classrooms (Lewis & Dockter, 2011) where required canonical texts from American and British literature, rather than engagement, anchor the curriculum (Applebee, 1993; Hale & Crowe, 2001; Sewell, 2008; Yagleski, 2005)" (257). Evaluating the results of this study, student engagement in selection of books is directly correlated to choosing their own books of YA literature to find connection. The study was interesting, too, in that "transactional reading" was occurring and "through their engagement with these books and one another, these young adults were recognizing the possibility of, and the cultural tools for, shaping their individual and collective lives" (Ivey and Johnson 271). The selection, reading, sharing and internalizing of YA literature had transformed the students and their "reported sense of agency in reading and persistence through challenging texts ironically resembles the performance and

dispositions that seem to be the goal of common approaches to skill and strategy instruction” (Ivey and Johnson 272-273). This ownership was just not happening for these students through canonical literature, regardless of how critically acclaimed the literature was or how it was taught.

“Read This, Not That: Why and How I’ll Use Young Adult Literature in My Classroom,” an article from the *Virginia English Journal* acknowledges, “Young adult literature as a genre suffers from an undeserved stigma” (Dyer 33), as many know who have grappled in English department meetings often with some of the more pre-digital age or traditional teachers about using YA literature in the classroom. Dyer further explains, “[s]ome teachers use it for students who are not advanced enough to handle ‘real’ literature” (33), which ironically to students might seem a reward more than a punishment. The incredible success and sales of YA literature and the adaptation of several titles into blockbuster movies can only mean that adolescents en masse are relating to and valuing YA titles. Often, pop culture appeal relegates any work into a category that may not receive critical acclaim, “[b]ut as a genre, young adult literature exposes students to a diverse set of viewpoints and is far more relevant and meaningful to teenagers than canonical literature. Young adult literature allows teen readers an opportunity to explore real issues that they are actively and currently experiencing” (Dyer 33). After all, isn’t, as Rosenblatt hoped, self-knowledge at least half the intended learning outcome of studying literature in the ELA classroom?

Again referencing Michael Cart in his article, “The Value of Young Adult Literature” for the American Library Association, he believes, “Another value of young adult literature is its capacity for fostering understanding, empathy, and compassion by

offering vividly realized portraits of the lives – exterior and interior – of individuals who are unlike the reader.” Adolescent readers in particular can realize the similarities in all mankind, with whom the globalization of modern society is bringing them closer and closer each day. Reading the lives and emotions of others allows young adults to travel to other cities or countries and to experience vicariously other cultures and life choices. Cart also explains, “In this way young adult literature invites its readership to embrace the humanity it shares with those who – if not for the encounter in reading – might forever remain strangers or – worse — irredeemably ‘other’” (Cart, “The Value”). Therefore, culturally attuned ELA teachers incorporate adolescent-themed literature from a variety of perspectives and topics into their lessons for the benefit of not just the individual, but a global society. Presenting relatable, relevant literature encourages the adolescent reader to explore and hopefully discover new paths in life and appreciation for the paths others may choose. The ultimate goal there, Cart believes, is that “[b]y giving readers such a frame of reference, it also helps them to find role models, to make sense of the world they inhabit, to develop a personal philosophy of being, to determine what is right and, equally, what is wrong, to cultivate a personal sensibility. To, in other words, become civilized” (“The Value”). In the digital age, empathy and appreciation for self and others can grow digital literacy and digital ethics which are sorely needed.

As recently as the early twentieth century, education was in the business of creating managers and workers – those males who would be leaders and those who would be followers “split into groups by residence, ethnicity, and social status” (Rotundo 345). For girls, education prepared them for work in the home, “to be ‘useful’ within the matrix of the family” (Formanek-Brunell 363). Much of the pedagogy behind the current

American classroom is still based on this model. Literature study was not for most students unless it was for memorization of classics; rarely if ever was literature “to develop the ability to read independently, purposively, and critically. Such an approach was very different from their passively receiving indoctrination from a biased reading list” (Rosenblatt ix). By the mid-twentieth century, educators like Louise Rosenblatt “saw ways in which teaching should be changed” where reading literature was no longer just “about the nature of the literary work and the social role of literature ... from the point of view of the creative process carried on by the author, the poet or novelist” (xxi). This is an invaluable life lesson for anyone to learn, but one which may be more crucial today due to the global nature of communication, myriad cross-cultural influences, and omnipresent international information available to twenty-first century youth, especially. Because of reasons just like these and more, “the Young Adult Library Services Association values young adult literature, believes it is an indispensable part of public and school library collections, and regards it as essential to healthy youth development and the corollary development of healthy communities in which both youth and libraries can thrive” (Cart, “The Value”), necessitating its incorporation into the globally attuned secondary ELA classroom.

Senior editor for the *School Library Journal*, Shelley M. Diaz suggests a caution though that with the recent prevalence of young adult literature, “in the age of ‘crossover’ (YA titles that appeal to adults), ‘crossunder’ (adult books with teen protagonists), ‘new adult’ and ‘younger YA,’ are we losing sight of the primary audience? This is a challenging question because teens now are potentially more advanced than their predecessors if only in that they have more exposure to more adult themes. A question

then is, do young adults need more youthful topics to keep a balance or should the literature keep pace with the times? “Alvina Ling, vice president and editor-in-chief at Little, Brown Books for Young Readers” adds to Diaz’s initial question on the focus audience of YA novels being middle or upper grades, ““In terms of content, both can feature coming-of-age themes. YA novels can sometimes include cursing, drinking, drugs, and sexual content, whereas this is very rarely included in middle grade”” (qtd. in Diaz 23). Hopefully, keeping the true purpose in mind, the titles will be clearly distinguished and educators will do their part to carefully select the best titles for the adolescents in their charge, guiding them relevantly yet with mutual moderation.

Scholastic Reading editorial director Anne Marie Wong “believes that ‘YA is a bit of an in-between tender middle grade and lawless adult books’” (Diaz) and that sums it up fairly well. Even though the lines are still a bit blurry, the appeal of YA titles can be seen by the authors who are joining the category like, “Joyce Carol Oates and Sherman Alexie, [who] are writing for young adults in increasing numbers. The line between the adult and teen markets continues to fade” (Diaz). A significant educator challenge in selecting young adult titles for the classroom is that gap between what students might perceive as childish versus what adults might be perceive as too mature. If teachers want to connect with students, sometimes possibly outdated limits might need to be pushed, and fortunately, “[f]ormats, genres, topics – nothing is off limits. Hybrid works, such as fictionalized nonfiction, illustrated novels, and books that embrace several genres at once, are on the rise. ‘YA is much more open to art and text interacting and still being literary,’ says Goldblatt” (qtd. in Diaz) about the positive side of young adult literature. Every possible topic is available, but it is still a negotiation between student wants or wishes,

teacher or parent needs, and also the demands of administration or curriculum. However, that the novels which can help students navigate some of life's more confusing issues are at least just a reach away is the best case scenario.

Acclaimed for his ability to state complex ideas usefully as it pertains to adolescent education in particular, Kelly Gallagher cuts to the chase in his work *Deeper Reading* to emphasize teachers need to ask, “What do I want my students to take from this book?” ...to tease out the real issues – those universal concerns found in any great book that mean a great deal to teenagers. Issues that lead adolescents to reflection. Issues that illuminate the books' relevance in their world” (154). Educators have a responsibility to teach and exemplify these ideals which “have become part of our cultural literacy,” and we need to be sure young adults, as Gallagher also suggests, “understand their origins” (154). These understandings and ethical considerations are vital in our fast-paced, instantly public world where students need more than ever to be “[m]aking connections between the literature and their loved ones, their families, their community, their nation, and their world” (Gallagher 158). In 2004 when Gallagher made this request, this need was considered important – in 2016 it is an imperative. Because students are often interacting individually with their device in isolation when they are curating and creating much of their social selves due to the one-on-one nature of adolescent to device, the likelihood of their not feeling the connection to the others with whom they are interacting is easily possible.

With digital literacy and digital ethics discussion reinforced in the schools, in at least the secondary English classrooms, students have a greater chance of listening to and following that voice of “digital” reason over their shoulders. Gallagher continues in the

book to reiterate, “Sure, I want them to be able to analyze literature in my class, but the bigger picture goal is that they develop these cognitive skills to a level where they may be transferred beyond the classroom” (169). This notion of cognitive skills being needed beyond school is not new, however, the sheer amount of what kids today have to understand about themselves and their interactions in a digital reality could be overwhelming. The point here again is young adult literature has become so popular out of a desire for youths to better understand themselves and the world, often digitally speaking, in which they live. Adolescents need to realize understanding personal or societal origin and foundation by remembering where ‘ya’ came from, and where YA as young adult literature origins came from, can help them have more confidence in their own independence, in making healthy choices, and participating in guided discussions about how they actually want to present themselves in person or online. There is more happening digitally than meets the eye, and adolescents’ desire to read more about their experiences may be due to their sense of that awareness.

Chapter 2. The State of ELA Pedagogy in the Digital Age

The fast-paced nature of technology has caused many educators to realize an urgent need to be part of the digital literacy and digital ethics conversation, and young adult literature provides a positive opportunity for this in the secondary ELA classroom. In his 2013 article, “No Longer a Luxury: Digital Literacy Can’t Wait,” Troy Hicks explains, “We are parents. We are English teachers. We are citizens in a digital age. And we are worried” (Hicks and Turner 58). We are now squarely in the digital age with technology firmly in place. No longer is it possible for anyone to hypothesize that digital resources are just a fad – they are here to stay. As parents and teachers grapple to embrace technology themselves, it is also crucial that open and direct discussion and instruction in digital media with young adults needs to be happening. Hicks further reasons, “Yet, we know that large-scale change is more likely to occur when classroom teachers lead the charge, as is evidenced by the work of the National Writing Project” (Hicks and Turner 59). Digital literacy is no longer an underground issue and the professional teaching associations like the National Writing Project and National Council of Teachers of English are leading the charge. Put simply, “English teachers must embrace a new role: We must advocate for digital literacy, not just technology, in a way that reconceptualizes our discipline. We must dump the dittos, throw out the workbooks, and remix our teaching for a digital age” (Hicks 61). Teachers can no longer use and discuss technology as just a tool, but as a new way of interacting with each other personally and globally.

Even companies over the last few years understand that instruction is needed; recently, the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) “announced the

creation of a partnership with Best Buy to provide funds that would be used by libraries to expand teen digital literacy skill development” (Chapman). An underlying factor in this decision may be consumerism, but that there is an inequity in accessibility and therefore ability to use technology equally is also a consideration. Access is a first step, however, “although many teens do have access to this technology, they are often still in need of instruction as to how to use it. When teens enter the work force as adults, this new knowledge will provide them with the skills that they need to survive in today's high-tech world” (Chapman). Schools and libraries have most of the pieces of the technology puzzle involving access and training; the challenge is completing the design so that students have what they need and know how, why, and when to use it to maximize learning and growth in the digital age. Just knowing how to text or use word processing is no longer enough.

Young adults also have many ethical decisions to make when interacting digitally for school, work, or socially. Professor Daniel Richards explains in his webpage for Writing Commons about digital ethics, “It is useful to think of ethics as the ‘appropriate’ methods for actions and relating to others in a given environment. Guidance or governance for effective online communication exists only through general patterns of experiences that accumulate over time.” Therefore, educators and students must practice the necessary skills to help youth curate and cultivate media in positive ways, and not just on how literally to use devices. Young adults need to be having conversations about how to act on the Internet and how to develop and portray their own presence as well.

Youth Using Changing Technology: The Digital Literacy Involved

From a compilation of interviews conducted with researchers and educators on the subject of digital media and literacy issues sponsored by the MacArthur Foundation, Research Network on Youth and Participatory Politics researcher Joseph Kahne explains, “Supporting young people’s ability to judge the credibility of what they find online, for example, will be important. Similarly, youth will need mentors – both peers and adults – who can help them develop their abilities to tap the full potential of these media. That will help them learn to create and circulate compelling media” (Ray 79). Others in the field like Tené Gray, director of the Digital Youth Network (DYN) who works with Chicago youth “to be meaningful producers of digital media,” says that DYN “want[s] to make sure mentors know how to use technology and media as a way to design learning experiences that lead to identity building and artifact creation” (Ray 114). Their hope is shared by many who want to ensure educators who interact with youth in programs or classrooms have a plan for instruction on digital literacy and digital ethics so that students know how to produce media as well as what that media will say about them.

An invaluable resource to modern educators is a recent text, *It’s Complicated*, by Microsoft researcher and academic scholar Danah Boyd, in which she explains so clearly the issues that have to be addressed in all classrooms, but potentially most importantly secondary ELA classrooms. Boyd cautions:

Rather than assuming that youth have innate technical skills, parents, educators, and policymakers must collectively work to support those who come from different backgrounds and have different experiences.

Educators have an important role to play in helping youth navigate

networked publics and the information-rich environments that the internet supports. (Boyd 180)

These ideas are supported in much of the research to be found through private companies like Microsoft as well as through professional education associations like NWP and NCTE as evidenced through the work of Troy Hicks and others. Quite logically, kids need more often to know how "to engage productively with networked situations, including the ability to control how personal information flows and how to look for and interpret accessible information" (Boyd 180). Whether young adults are participating digitally "either as consumers or producers - they need to have the skills to ask questions about the construction and dissemination of particular media artifacts. What biases are embedded in the artifact? How did the creator intend for an audience to interpret that artifact, and what are the consequences of that interpretation?" (181). Time and time again, teachers are confronted with student work showing the need for practice and awareness in this area. Often, if students read it on the Internet, they believe it to be true. This is even more concerning because "[t]eens view Google as the center of the digital information universe" (186). Perhaps revolutionary educators should even consider decapitalizing the "I"nternet in an effort to overthrow the internet as an official source of reliable information.

Many frequent users of the Internet, even just for email, may not realize how much they are being influenced without their consent. Boyd gathers research from other tech-savvy professionals to highlight some of these more inconspicuous issues. "In his 2011 book, *The Filter Bubble*, political activist and technology creator Eli Pariser argues that personalization algorithms produce social divisions that undermine any ability to

create an informed public” and therefore unaware users “might only be shown results that align with their political views, thereby reinforcing a political gulf” (Boyd 186). Internet users in virtually any capacity are being monitored and then “fed” what the website owners or Internet service providers believe these users would prefer. With the vast amounts of information on the Internet, this might not seem to the unaware user as an issue worthy of note, but truly it is. Restricted or selected information, if it is the only initial information provided, may give users the false sense of that being the only information available. Oddly enough and contrary to popular opinion, "analyses have shown that Wikipedia's content is just as credible as, if not more reliable than, more traditional resources like Encyclopedia Britannica" (Boyd 187). Without a doubt, educators need to find a consensus and then disseminate reliable and current information to students as part of digital literacy instruction. This will require all participants involved in the education of modern youth in this digital age to be ever vigilant and knowledgeable on not just the devices, but to what these devices can provide access.

Another Internet-related literacy issue that is not addressed as effectively as possible is access to specifically “mature” or inappropriate content on the Internet. If educators and parents turn a blind eye to what is out there or attempt to restrict adolescents from negative content, not only is that a slippery slope of limiting intellectual freedom, but more likely it is clearly impossible. Instead, educators should consider there are so many young adult literature titles available on all the modern digital issues to present mature content appropriately. Again, Boyd warns, "Censorship of inaccurate or problematic content does not provide youth the skills they will one day need to evaluate information independently. They need to know how to grapple with the plethora of

information that is easily accessible and rarely vetted. And given the uneven digital literacy skills of youth, we cannot abandon them to learn these lessons on their own" (181-182). Teachers first educating themselves, then transferring options for choices and values to young adults is a daunting task, to say the least. What, unfortunately, would be the alternative? With planned instruction and guided discussion, using young adult literature as the conversation starter, educators can provide information for students to make informed decisions on how they interact with the Internet.

The concept that most adults, more senior parents and teachers in particular, are not digital natives, "a term coined by U.S. author Marc Prensky in 2001" as "those born into an innate 'new culture' while the digital immigrants are old-world settlers, who have lived in the analogue age and immigrated to the digital world" (Joy), while their children and students are, adds an extra layer of complexity to the trust and comfort levels between adults and young adults. The Federal Trade Commission, in an "Online On Guard" guide, asserts to adults that children "need to know that you and other family members can ask them about what they're doing online" (NetCetera). Children need to realize that online relationships have the potential to be dangerous due to the anonymity afforded by non-face-to-face interaction. Prior to the age of the Internet, parents' most serious media concerns were unintended exposure to magazine or billboard images that were too mature or edited for a more perfect image. Now, the FTC cautions parents and teens that "not everything they see on the internet is true... people online may not be who they appear to be or say they are" (Net Cetera), so an open line of communication about online interactions and relationships between adults and adolescents is crucial and these digital literacy subjects must be part of classroom instruction. Discussing time limits,

acceptable use, appropriate risks, curating, and cultivating one's digital identity is crucial for young adults to acquire the skills they will need in the global, technology-reliant culture.

Eric Zimmerman, "game designer and founding faculty member of the NYU Game Center," offers that "over the years literacy scholars have come to realize that literacy is about more than reading and writing. Today it needs to also include visual literacy, technical literacy, procedural literacy, and computational literacy" (Ray 196). Secondary language arts teachers share in this responsibility due to the online and digital nature of many educational resources and learning opportunities. As an advocate of game play in education, Zimmerman concludes, "To play a game well, you need to understand not just how the system works but also how people work" (Ray 197), therefore, calling for a combined discussion on digital literacy and digital ethics. While it is also the responsibility of the secondary instructor to follow school system and administrative mandates and expectations, there is still opportunity for digital literacy as more than how to use a computer to be presented as a learning goal since many school systems already include media literacy skills in their standards of learning.

For a backwards glance, *Rethinking Education in the Age of Technology* provides perspective on how slowly and cautiously education adopts new ideas. Published over seven years ago, predating the impact on education in 2013 when high-stakes testing came to a head and technology enhanced questions were added, Collins forecasts the opportunity America's schools have to personalize education for students to provide the most relevant and beneficial learning environment possible. He, however, notes "the deep incompatibilities between technology and schooling. Thus it is no surprise that

technology's main impact on learning is occurring outside of school" (xiv) and "[i]f educators cannot successfully integrate new technologies into what it means to be in school... students with the means and ability will pursue their learning outside of the public school" (xv). Collins is concerned that schools will lose their edge because "technology fits much more comfortably into the home environment than into the school environment" (68) where potentially less professional guidance would be available.

A concern there, too, is the digital divide will gain an even stronger foothold than it already has, meaning, as Northwestern University's head of the Web Use Project Eszter Hargittai worries, "people from less privileged backgrounds are less digitally savvy. This also means people from less privileged backgrounds are doing fewer things online, including contributing things like putting their voices out there or sharing content" (*Leading* 176). Hargittai also explains the lack of access for lower socioeconomic statuses is tied to a lack of adult supervision so her group is "interested in understanding the levels of concern parents have about their kids meeting strangers, being exposed to pornography, seeing violent content, and being bullied or bullying" (*Leading* 179). Here again, though not optimal, books can be a more affordable venue for students to stay in the know about digital literacy and weigh digital ethics at home with or without internet access, though there is also much discussion from many sides on the issue of the digital divide, even the "ethical imperative for studying the digital divide" (Knight), as one blogger has phrased it.

Technology Use Changing Youth: The Digital Ethics Involved

To more completely understand the seriousness of the implications of digital devices and their uses, adults and young adults need to be aware of why and how

technology is not just changing the game, but the player, neurologically. Kids just don't learn the way they used to. Anyone who has tried, possibly in vain, to reach a group of adolescents with traditional or "old school" methodologies has quickly realized this. Kids are different now. Priorities have changed. What motivates them and inspires them is different. They are different. The digital age of device and Internet use has smuggled in an unexpected consequence, neurological implications. Educators have an ethical imperative to discuss with students the potential physical and emotional risks involved in digital use. This is where digital literacy as it currently stands isn't sufficient to cover the needs of adolescents' digital accessibility. Technology and its incessancy in the lives of adolescents has changed them socially, emotionally, and neurologically. Unfortunately, "[u]p until just a few years ago, the neuroscience of the adolescent brain was underfunded, underresearched, and obviously not well understood. Scientists believed - incorrectly, as it turned out - that brain growth was pretty much complete by the time a child started kindergarten" (Jensen and Nutt 3). Now, however, researchers and educators realize the actual, extended time period for potential brain development. This additional time is both a blessing and a curse because before knowing this, adults could conceivably restrict children's use of digital devices while they were young and that was enough.

Though finding a balance so students are adequately versed in using digital devices and media for socialization and school purposes is recommended, "[c]ritics, however, maintain that it is not necessarily healthy for children to be constantly entertained by media" ("Children's"). Hopefully, therefore, monitoring access will allow pre-adolescent brains to develop without digital devices as a main source of information and entertainment. Restricting the teenager's use proves much more complicated than a

younger child's. Device or access restriction could handicap an adolescent's social status and educational opportunities, but overuse must be addressed. Here again, use of young adult literature with digital issues and reliance as a focus can open the conversation for adolescents to start considering how they are choosing to interact with devices and the consequences of their use on the development of their brain's learning preferences.

There is a massive shift in learning that has already begun by virtue of students' social uses of digital media and devices; and, there is also a "[n]europlasticity, or brain plasticity" connection to "the brain's ability to change throughout life" (Michelon). Much like a muscle, the parts of the brain which are used the most are the parts which develop most. Explained more scientifically: "In that developing prefrontal cortex, synapses are selected based on whether they're used or not, so behaviors that shape the brain are more likely maintained if started at this age. The brain is acting a bit like a sponge; it can soak up new information and change to make room for it, a concept known as plasticity" (Edmonds). It stands to reason then, that since "[t]oday's teenagers are the world's leading authorities on technology, and while adolescents are the savviest of users, they are also the most vulnerable" to the relatively new diagnosis of "'Internet addiction'" (Jensen and Nutt 2007). Also, because "[a]n area of the teenager's brain that is fairly well-developed early on, though, is the nucleus accumbens, or the area of the brain that seeks pleasure and reward" (Edmonds), the danger of digital addiction is very real. Jensen explained to a patient "that being addicted to the Internet involves the same reward center as drugs, and when he was a teenager, he was more susceptible to addiction in general, so it was understandable from a neurobiological perspective how he could get caught up in it" (Jensen and Nutt 2006).

Clearly, interacting digitally for non-essential versus essential purposes must be addressed, coupled with an urgent, ethical need for comprehensive conversations on digital use and awareness. If educators spend time discussing positive decision making as it pertains to digital use and awareness, particularly the time adolescents spend on devices as well types of media (playing flashy video games or reading an ebook in lower brightness) they are exposing themselves to, young adults are more likely to understand the consequences of the exposure.

Chapter 3. Using Technology and Young Adult Literature for Change:

Digital Literacy Becomes Digital Ethics

Very often, the secondary English classroom becomes a forum for student discussion of universal issues like love and trust through literature study of required texts and choice novels. While it can be debated to what extent a classroom conversation should include discussions of moral and ethical implications, these conversations are inevitable. The confluence of digital literacy and digital ethics in the secondary classroom can also be participated in and fostered by careful and deliberate selection of current young adult literature for the language arts classroom. Preaching a particular belief is not the goal here; merely selecting and openly discussing literature that tackles many of life's more debatable topics is.

From the text *Teaching Literature to Adolescents* edited by Richard Beach and others, "As Peter Singer (1991) argues, 'We cannot avoid involvement in ethics, for what we do – and what we don't do – is always a possible subject of ethical evaluation. Anyone who thinks about what he or she ought to do is, consciously or unconsciously, involved in ethics' (p.v)" (qtd. in Beach, et.al. 171). Secondary English language arts instructors are often charged with the role of a type of character instruction by virtue of the standards of learning designated to the subject area. The rapid advances in technology and readily available devices with almost instant access to the Internet necessitate the defining of and instruction in two significant topics: digital literacy and digital ethics. The first concept implies that the readily available digital resources, as in "pertaining to, noting, or making use of computers and computerized technologies" ("Digital") have applications which extend beyond digital use and awareness, warranting the need for

“rules of conduct recognized in respect to a particular class of human actions or a particular group, culture, etc.” (“Ethics”).

In 2009, researchers for the MacArthur Foundation were investing millions on what they perceived to be issues revolving around youth and digital media skills with their concentration on “intersection of youth and digital fluency” because they felt “that the promises and perils of the new media are especially salient for those young people who possess digital skills, spend considerable amounts of time online, and are assuming new kinds of roles there” (James et. al. 17). Their researchers further sought to “consider evidence regarding how young people conceive of the ethical responsibilities that accompany their new media play” (James et. al. 18) in order “to understand and encourage good play not to create more obedient, respectful youth but to develop ethical reflection and conduct as a key foundation for youth empowerment” (James et. al. 89-90). The foundation’s intentions are not to list what is or isn’t a “good” choice, but to open the conversation so that adolescents, hopefully in conjunction with adults, can educate themselves on the negatives as well as the positives in digital literacy and digital ethics options. The debate on whether or not it was appropriate or even possible to instruct youth on moral decision making is nothing new. “Almost 2500 years ago, the philosopher Socrates debated the question with his fellow Athenians” on whether or not ethics can be taught and his “position was clear: Ethics consists of knowing what we ought to do, and such knowledge can be taught” (Velasquez, et. al.). Awareness of, not insistence on, what to do while interacting with digital devices and online is the grounds upon which educators can provide guidance.

Often, literature elicits some feeling, a response, or a “moral” in a reader, so why not embrace young adult literature which highlights issues youth face in the digital age particularly to prompt these discussions with professional instructors as facilitators? As psychologist Keith McCurdy suggests, “When we don’t demonstrate morality in what we do, we don’t prepare our children to live healthy” and “[u]nfortunately, we have gone from teaching and holding to a moral standard of living, to working feverishly to minimize the consequences of immoral actions. We are truly fighting the wrong battle.” As with many aspects of educating youth, taking a proactive stance is usually more time efficient than being reactive, and likely less risky. In Virginia’s Standards of Learning, for example, even kindergarten students “will use available technology for reading and writing” (“English” 3). Digital literacy is then expanded on gradually through grade twelve to include media literacy goals such as 12.2 where students “will examine how values and points of view are included or excluded and how media influences beliefs and behaviors... [e]valuate sources including advertisements, editorials, blogs, Web sites, and other media for relationships between intent, factual content, and opinion... [d]etermine the author’s purpose and intended effect on the audience for media messages” (“English” 38). These standards coupled with the elements of literature already established as part of English curriculum lay the groundwork for incorporating current young adult literature in the classroom, even though time might be an obstacle due to the myriad other required elements they must include.

Looking more closely, then, at what digital ethics are, Professor Dan Richards’ use of the term “netiquette” supports not only the rationale for teaching digital ethics, but the state standards by affirming, “netiquette -- how we communicate, treat others, portray

ourselves, and protect ourselves online -- is a question of ethics.” There is no shortage of information available on the potential risks involved in not formally addressing the choices present in the digital worlds young adults will encounter in modern culture. Whether or not students have their own devices or access to the Internet personally, it is virtually impossible not to be exposed to digital images, ideas, and influences on a school bus ride, in a classroom, or elsewhere in the community. Also, modern economies and changing family structures often lead to one parent households or households where parents both work outside the home and like any potentially damaging topic, digital ethics cannot be left to chance. Possibly, then, the secondary English classroom will be enhanced by those students who can bring their family’s digital ethics and values into the discussion for consideration in an open discussion.

Further support comes from the website *The Young and the Digital*: “We instinctively understand that our public institutions (i.e., schools), policy initiatives, and spread of media technologies must be a valuable resource for students” (Watkins). Watkins goes on to advocate for inclusion of social media use and conduct strategies when he disappointingly explains, “Because social media is such a big part of many student’s social lives, cultural identities, and informal learning networks schools actually find themselves grappling with social media everyday but often from a defensive posture—reacting to student disputes that play out over social media or policing rather than engaging student’s social media behaviors” (Watkins “What Schools”). Again, the need for educators to take a proactive and positive stance on digital literacy and digital ethics skills is clear.

Though concern about cyberbullying often receives the most attention currently in the area of digital safety, and for sound reason, understanding one's digital footprint and image are of rising importance. So often, in order to create a public persona, young adults are posting or sharing information or images assuming these will only be seen by friends. Again referencing Boyd, she suggests much as in Baudelaire's French social scene, modern youth "choose to share in order to be a part of the public, but how much they share is shaped by how public they want to be. They are, in effect, digital flaneurs - - individuals who came to the streets not to go anywhere, but to see and be seen" (Boyd 203). In modern terms, this is no different than going to the mall or a school event, really, but in the digital age, there is more permanence with instant photos and social media posting options. An inherent risk in posting anything online is that once it is posted to the Internet, it is no longer the sole property of the individual.

The MacArthur Foundation dedicated extensive time and money to investigating and defining the need for looking at technology and its uses in a "participatory culture" a decade ago in 2006 "as a term that cuts across educational practices, creative processes, community life, and democratic citizenship. Our goals should be to encourage youth to develop the skills, knowledge, ethical frameworks, and self-confidence needed to be full participants in contemporary culture" (Clinton). Again, if done in cooperation with school administration, state educational standards, as well as the school community goals considered, all members of that community will benefit by digital ethics instructional inclusion in secondary language arts classrooms. Through informed research and deliberate instruction, both the parents and teachers (non-digital natives) and young

adults (digital natives) will share in the potential assets the available digital tools can provide.

The National Writing Project promotes youth conversations with the website they sponsor called Youth Voices. The NWP feels the digital and online community is a necessary presence for students because “[o]ver the years the teachers who have been working together to grow Youth Voices have learned that as important as it is to have students publish multi-media, well-crafted products, it is at least as important to nurture, guide, and allow time for students to write comments and to develop conversations about each other’s discussion posts” (“What’s Youth”). One of the most useful ideas for fostering digital literacy from the article suggests, “Treating digitalk as wrong, rather than as an example of legitimate linguistic code-switching, will not validate the digital literacy that students bring to the classroom. In contrast, discussing students’ use of digitalk may serve as an opportunity to talk about audience, purpose, and appropriate uses of language in different situations” (Hicks and Turner 61). Educators can easily present the idea that students do not need to abandon various versions of language; they just need to understand where and when to use them for the results they desire – again, a mixture of digital literacy and digital ethics must occur.

In a *Ted Talk*, “Connected, but Alone,” Sherry Turkle explains yet another problem with young adults relying on digital devices without professional guidance and direction. She explains that “what might feel just right for that middle-aged executive can be a problem for an adolescent who needs to develop face-to-face relationships. An 18-year-old boy who uses texting for almost everything says to me wistfully, ‘Someday, someday, but certainly not now, I’d like to learn how to have a conversation’” (Turkle).

Further, she discovered “When [she asks] people ‘What's wrong with having a conversation?’ People say, ‘I'll tell you what's wrong with having a conversation. It takes place in real time and you can't control what you're going to say’” (Turkle). This may seem innocent enough, but quickly one realizes, again as Turkle clarifies, “Texting, email, posting, all of these things let us present the self as we want to be. We get to edit, and that means we get to delete, and that means we get to retouch, the face, the voice, the flesh, the body -- not too little, not too much, just right” (Turkle). Her studies reaffirm that youth in a digital age are changing not just in their advanced ability to use technology, but in their decreased ability to communicate without it.

In his text *Teaching the iStudent*, practitioner Mark Barnes suggests that educators must teach students about digital skills, claiming that “locating the right tools and understanding how to use them for independent learning and content curation is arguably the 21st-century learner’s most critical skill and should be a part of every educator’s weekly lesson plans” (11). Students have said that one of the best reasons to read is to live vicariously through the novels, especially the young adult novels, they read. Trying out different ideas about self through reading can be a positive self-esteem builder, but can also be a venue for teachers to engage with students about the dangers inherent in the possible anonymity the Internet provides. Some youth will partake in destructive behavior such as cyberbullying on the Internet because they feel they can avoid being caught. Also, Barnes laments the story of a British teen who took her own life after being cyberbullied on Ask.fm. Barnes hopes preventative digital education “can be used as a strong foundation for teaching students the responsibility that accompanies creating, sharing and maintaining information and opinion on the internet” (11-12). Barnes

understands oftentimes “students fail to understand the power and posterity... and how ill-conceived and haphazardly shared content can be damaging to many parties” (Barnes 13). What’s more, Barnes is not alone in believing, “If Facebook, Twitter and the like are blocked from student access the foray into this astonishing universe of digital collaboration cannot begin. Getting there has to be a team effort. Teachers, principals, superintendents, parents, and even students must work together to create an action plan for appropriate use” (15). If the use of social media is demonstrated properly and supported via guided discussion, it is to be hoped students learn social media is no longer a place where students can hide behind their computer screens, but instead take part in a global activity for good, not mischief. Theoretically, “[c]onstant reinforcement of appropriate use will create a symbiotic relationship between the technology and how students use it, and this will forever serve them” (Barnes 17) as they navigate their digital spaces with literacy and ethics tools.

After reading Tony Bates’s *Teaching in a Digital Age*, an interactive, open (free), online text which encourages public or private note taking, a topic by topic comment section, and embedded podcasts by Bates, teachers might find from it a blueprint of sorts on moving their classroom pedagogy and methodology where technology and digital skills are inclusive rather than an afterthought. Even though his text is designed for college level, it can be easily adapted for any grade level. One section of considerable value describes a model of learning which “Harasim now calls online collaborative learning (OCL)” where “students are encouraged and supported to work together to create knowledge; to invent, to explore ways to innovate, and, by doing so, to seek conceptual knowledge needed to solve problems rather than recite what they think is the

right answer” (Bates, 4.4.1). What can easily be taken from this theory is the use of young adult literature titles that come from student generated need and then are utilized within the classroom culture to investigate organic digital literacy and digital ethics issues. There is no shortage in Bates’s text on options for designing a personalized classroom to suit the requirements of all involved. Also affirming the likelihood of Bates’s text being a “go-to” resource is his plans to continuously edit and add to the text as contributions are made by others who interact with his text. Again, allowing the invested participants in learning to engage with the text in this way exemplifies teacher as model and collaborator.

Taking Bates’s ideas further, developing and utilizing digital literacy and digital ethics goal surveys for students, parents, and administrators would be beneficial for teachers hoping to establish a curriculum reflective of the needs of all participants in the digital age classroom as well. Depending on class by class needs, educators could create criteria lists for literature selection, digital literacy skills, digital ethics concerns, future career and academic technology goals, digital access concerns, or any other individual interests that might present themselves. In the text *Teaching Young Adult Literature Today*, researchers Sheehy and Clemmons believe teaching young adult literature “opens a powerful avenue to probe difficult concepts, investigate challenging ideas, and generate knowledge of the subject matter while seamlessly using various technologies to support this learning” (225). The literature then prompts the conversation and the classroom assignments and/or assessments can incorporate digital literacies to show understanding of concepts and digital ethics awareness. Again, Sheehy and Clemmons assert, “Students today have different expectations for learning, given their comfort with technology of all

kinds” (230). Maximizing on optimal learning opportunities using YA literature with a digital focus to foster a more digitally literate and ethical balance for students in the digital age is not only wise, it is absolutely essential.

Chapter 4. Connections, Applications, and Suggested Titles of YA Literature in Secondary ELA Classrooms

Friending, cyberbullying, anonymous hate, self-image, sexting, selfies, selfie-related deaths, future jobs and your illegal activity photos, cyberstalking, Liking, too much time on devices, witch hunting or hate speak on social media like Tumblr, misinformation, not checking sources – if it's on the internet it must be real, digital divide by access, new and changing technology, pornography or illegal activity access, Tor, predators, catfishing, plagiarism – digital art theft, illegal downloads – movies, music, how to handle social media overload and stress – kitten videos? These are just some of the overwhelming number of potential topics young adults must navigate in the digital age. To say that adolescents need a second opinion or guidance with these digital literacies and ethical digital choices is an understatement. Just as technology changes based on need, so too young adult literature has evolved to adapt to the changing needs and wishes of its audience. Though parents and teachers may have their own approaches to handling challenging topics with their students, young adult literature today has developed into an excellent resource for navigating young adult issues, especially within the secondary English classroom.

From a recent study, “Researchers such as Coats and Shirley Brice Heath, a linguistic anthropologist at Stanford University in California, have used brain imaging to see how reading can trigger certain parts of the brain, possibly leaving a lasting effect. Maria Nikolajeva, a professor of children's literature and critical theory at Cambridge University in England, organized a conference in September 2010 to discuss the effects of current adolescent literature on young peoples' brains” (“Young”). Realizing the

potential of this connection, educators can maximize on using young adult literature to aid in the guiding of youth toward positive personal decisions, since “[a]ccording to Nikolajeva, ‘[A]ll readers' brains are changed after they have read a book, but teenage brains are especially perceptive and therefore vulnerable’” (“Young”). This vulnerability can be both an advantage and a disadvantage. With professional advising, young adults can benefit from vicarious experimentation in young adult literature. Again:

According to Coats, the prefrontal cortex, the region of the brain that is in charge of reasoning and risk assessment, experiences a dramatic growth just before puberty and then reorganizes itself through the teenage years. As a result, Coats says, “teens are more likely to respond to situations emotionally, and they are less likely to consider consequences through rational forethought.” (“Young”)

Allowing adolescents a forum for reading and guided discussion of potential consequences of their actions can prove invaluable. Allowing students also to select the materials provides them an authentic learning option. When paired with choice novels, “[a]uthentic literacy offers a potential alternative or supplement to the textbook ... Reading outside of textbooks (e.g., fictional literature, blogs, magazines, tweets) is an authentic and enjoyable experience for many young adults. The nature of authentic texts, such as novels, engages and fosters reading” (Hughes 210) and can provide a doubly positive learning experience. Using technology and discussing digital ethics through young adult novels with a digital focus in the classroom, for blended learning opportunities like a “rotation model,” where student groups rotate using either computers or receiving direct instruction, “flex model,” where students bring their own devices, or

“lab model,” where all students have individual literature-based assignments on a computer (Barnes 28-31), can be quite successful. This blended use of digital topics in young adult literature and technology can create digital learning where “students leave the technology periodically, so they can interact with their teachers and with friends” (Barnes 29) while still supporting learning with digital literacy and digital ethics instruction.

In the twenty-first century, with the omnipresence of digital devices and access to the Internet, young adults need to understand the implications of the Internet in general and their interactions with it. As curators and consumers of digital literacies, young adults are likely to take more risks online than adults with far-reaching consequences that oftentimes cannot be undone. Secondary classroom English teachers have a unique opportunity to discuss and guide students through these challenging decisions. More and more young adult literature is being published with digital devices as a focus, and many with digital ethics issues as the theme or conflict. Additionally, adolescents are choosing literature that allows them to see life’s options and as Beach explains, “Early adolescents are not all that interested in complex psychological character motivations; they are interested in exploring alternative worlds – as reflected in their reading preferences for story-driven adventure, fantasy, mystery, or science fiction novels” (9). Selecting classroom novels with both digital aspects and alternative lifestyle plotlines can accomplish both curriculum goals and student reading preferences.

The rationale for this assertion then is, though “[a] more obvious problem for teachers is that these theories [of literary criticism] are also built on the most advanced thinking in such fields as philosophy, social theory and psychoanalysis, which few

English classes, as presently organized, have time to explore beyond the few reductive principles that may appear in the back of literature anthologies or that can be summarized by lectures” (Blau 4), doing so will ultimately benefit students and society through professional guidance and instruction on these relevant and necessary topics.

Pedagogically, Beach assures, “If students choose a particular topic or text for classroom activity, they then have a sense of ownership and responsibility for completing an activity because they were part of planning that activity” (10). In an adolescent’s developmental stage when students may feel that school or adult society does not value their culture, a classroom teacher can gain much leverage and respect from their students by first giving young adults respect through educational ownership. This planning design where teachers also adopt “[a] student-centered model [which] focuses on letting students respond to literature in terms of their own interests and needs” (Beach 10) is an optimal learning environment to discuss the literacy and ethical issues inherent in the digital age by allowing students to also participate in the selecting of assessment creation. Further, using group reading strategies and assignments, as Beach explains, is “[a] socio-cultural model focuse[d] on helping students acquire practices and tools through participation in social communities” (Beach 10). These methodologies are not only invaluable for student learning and internalizing of concepts, but foster an open discussion on controversial literacy and ethical challenges which can be expanded or limited based on the comfort of the class as well as the preferences of the decided-upon curriculum. With planning, research, and cooperation among parents and administrators,

teachers can foster the development of a particular kind of culture in their classrooms – a culture where the roles, responsibilities and rights of

students are such that they become engaged participants in the literary activity of the classroom, and contributors to (rather than mere observers or consumers of) the ya texts are discussed and construed in a community of readers and writers. (Blau 124)

Ideally, in addition to the literacy skills students will acquire, professionally guided ethical discussions may occur, which have been so lacking in students' unmonitored Internet worlds.

ALAN, NCTE's Assembly on Adolescent Literature, called for ideas based on theory from their fall 2015 review with their call for proposals on these essential questions on ways to "mediate media" in the digital age: "How do you foster innovative engagement with media in your professional setting? What are the challenges of teaching and learning in the digital age, and how might they be mediated? How do digital communities invite and/or exclude young people today? What role does/can YA literature play in successfully navigating life in the 'digital age'?" ("Call"). ALAN's request for teacher and researcher writing was based on their thoughts that "[t]oday's young adult readers access and generate young adult texts in myriad forms. Through multimedia platforms, television and film adaptations, fan fiction, and social media, they engage with stories in ways that extend beyond the originals. These opportunities for connection are rich in potential and complication" ("Call"). Again, the need for guidance in young adult navigation of the digital world is clear. Ultimately, the only remaining consideration is the literature selection choices which are in the hands of individual classroom teachers based on expectations by their administrations and curriculum. However, there are some

titles that may prove useful in providing at least excerpts for classroom discussions on digital literacy and ethics issues.

ALAN's review call mentions two titles: *Fangirl* by Rainbow Rowell published in 2013 about a college freshman who is accused of plagiarizing her "fanfic" writing by a professor with its modern relevance and *American Gods* by Neil Gaiman with its largely metaphorical implications founded on American idolization of earlier modern technology as "gods." Both works have digital literacy and digital ethics relevance showing these are not nearly as recent or only current issues, but are more long-lasting. With the variety of potential complications to be compounded on the already overscheduled and complex lives of twenty-first century youth, the more diverse the titles in the classroom teacher's library arsenal, the better. Developing and adding to a book list of YA titles can start with some of the most recent books discussed here.

A quick Google search of the word "fanfic" returns nearly four million results in less than a second, with topics like Harry Potter, TV, and cartoons, and is defined by Wikipedia as "fiction about characters or settings from an original work of fiction, created by fans of that work rather than by its creator ... rarely commissioned or authorized by the original work's creator or publisher ... Attitudes of authors and copyright owners of original works to fan fiction have ranged from indifference to encouragement to rejection ... Copyright owners have occasionally responded with legal action" ("Fan fiction"). From the title to its cover design, fan girls can spot the intent and artwork of Rainbow Rowell's novel *Fangirl* even from a distance. Almost imperceptibly, Rowell develops a story from a story within a larger story that has played out in real life to show where we are now in young adult literature. The reader quickly realizes that

Rowell has created a scenario where a college-bound twin lives an online life through her fanfic of The Simon Snow series, a loose similarity to the Harry Potter series, but primarily for its popularity and magic rather than storyline. Though its appeal is intended to be towards adolescents who participate in fanfic either as contributor or consumer, there is a thought-provoking message for educators in the digital age: what constitutes plagiarism and who should decide?

The main character, Cath, who authors a wildly popular online fanfic page, submits an original work based on Simon Snow and is unsympathetically stone-walled by her creative writing professor for plagiarism, without the opportunity for debate. The reader wonders why Cath never defends herself and why the professor never investigates the source further. Her twin sister, Wren, defends Cath's love for her fanfic, saying "It's not lame. It's important ... This is your life's work ... and it's extremely impressive. It would be, even if you didn't have thousands of fans" (Rowell 400). Other characters face additionally traumatic issues like binge drinking, bipolar depression, sexual identity, and other societal pressures associated with college and post-college pursuits and goals. Putting readers squarely in the minds of country-minded Midwestern college students in the digital age gives the book a contradictory, but realistic feel even when in the online world of Simon and Baz. Additionally, devoted readers of *Fangirl* loved the fanfic story in the novel so much, Rowell recently published an entire novel comprised solely of the online world of Cath's Simon and Baz called *Carry On*, which now has its own following. Fangirling has become so popular, "the fifth annual YALLFest" was held last fall in Charleston, SC. In her article for *Library Media Connection*, Emily McDaniel, a self-proclaimed fangirl, gushes about the "over sixty young adult authors [who] had

committed to attending” and how tickets for YALLFest events “sell out fast” (26) concluding that she left “inspired, uplifted, and enriched by the whole experience” (28). Clearly, being a young adult fiction fangirl is showing no signs of slowing down and so remains a necessary classroom topic for discussion.

There are hours and hours of six second video clips which can be looped together or shown separately which receive millions of views daily on Vine.co. Tying into the Vine craze, LeLe Pons, who made a name for herself six seconds at a time, released her first young adult novel as a “fictional memoir” (Pons “A Note”) in 2016 called *Surviving High School: Do It for the Vine*. She ameliorates herself to readers quickly with her self-deprecating honesty, admitting, “Not only did [she] used to be ‘uncool,’” she was a “social media virgin, long past the time it was normal” (16) who ended up becoming an Internet sensation invited to Coachella by international star DJ Steve Tao. LeLe’s stories of her high school drama and daily vine humor are blended nicely with discussions about classic literature and art, getting fake drunk on root beer, and being proud of Latina flair with advice like, “I believe that You-ness is something very special, no matter who you are, and it ought to be celebrated” (3).

Even though she asks of a friend at one point in the novel, “Doesn’t he understand my phone is my life? Without it I would literally be nothing – or, at least wouldn’t have achieved internet stardom, that’s for sure” (166). The most revealing part of the novel to help young readers understand the price of digital media success is in the end of the novel when she has almost ten million vine followers and says to her best friend, “Being famous is stupid; I don’t even think I want it” (225). The novel is a cheerful and real story of the fun and stresses of a digital lifestyle that she ultimately steps away from, but

not completely. Instead, she finds a happy medium saying, “I need only six seconds to tell a story, and as long as I have that, I know I’ll be just fine” (257).

Popular vlogger, YouTuber, and now author known by the YouTube username Zoella, writes, using her real name Zoe Sugg, an adorable tale of a *Girl Online* who decides with the guidance of her best friend Elliot to work out some anxiety issues she has been having in her online blog. This work of fiction strongly resembles another paper “log” version titled *Bridget Jones’s Diary* by fellow Brit Helen Fielding, but for younger adults. Allowing readers to experience the trials and tribulations of a teen with charming realism and occasional brutal honesty makes *Girl Online* a heartwarming story about the struggles of being a teenage girl with a digital twist. The book can inspire even the most reluctant readers and can even provide some support for those awkward moments teens might feel only happen to them. It may seem daunting to achieve critical reading of a novel with more social digital aspects, but as a recent *Virginia English Journal* article asserts, “if you have a reasonable group of students and you give them a variety of materials and books to read, don’t tell them what or how to think, and then give them time to consider what they are reading and to share their thoughts with one another, you may, to cite Thoreau, ‘meet with a success unexpected in common hours’” (Thompson, et. al.25).

By using prose, text messages, and blog entries, Penny reveals her life thoughts and hopes for herself and others. Towards the end of the story, Penny posts to her blog readers: “I love you guys so much and I’m so grateful for all of your support. Keep posting about facing your fears – and keep believing in fairy tales” (Sugg 167).

Researchers Sheehy and Clemmons support the use of blogs in the classroom since

“[s]tudents focus on using language to create their narratives, and an electronic blog is an ideal medium; it allows an informal setting for experimenting with stream-of-consciousness writing as well as the ability to add multimedia effects to enhance their blogs” (230). Sugg’s use of mixed media and digital ethics helps develop in readers a confidence in using digital media in a positive and responsible way. Like *Fangirl*, Sugg’s instant success with *Girl Online* prompted her to write a second book in the series called *Girl Online on Tour*. For fans of this type of fiction, educators can easily locate other titles through Goodreads or Amazon’s recommendations like *Adorkable* by Sarra Manning or *The Secret Diary of Lizzie Bennet* series by Bernie Su and Kate Rorick, depending on the age level of the reader.

A modern character with “Good Girl Korean DNA” (Love 4) is how Hannah describes herself to her best friend Nick, who she has actually never met *In Real Life*, also the title of the novel. Hannah and Nick have had a great friendship from eighth grade until senior year when the novel is set, all online or over the phone. They have shared photos and details about their lives, but agreed never to meet since they lived so far apart. Until one day finally Hannah realizes, “Following the rules for the past 17 years has gotten me absolutely nowhere” (10) and decides to surprise Nick with a visit. Since they thought they had avoided the danger of what online daters refer to as “catfishing,” pretending to be people they are not in order to “catch” a mate, since they were just friends, Hannah never assumed she would be surprised by Nick when they actually met. She learns a heartbreaking digital age lesson that unless one meets the person “IRL,” there is no way to be sure who they really are. This novel, too, has bloggers, best friends, and high school drama, combined with Shakespeare, Zen, and Las Vegas, yet a pleasantly

complex feel. The flaws and merits of online relationships are worked through carefully and thoughtfully where modern life is compared to a roller coaster ride that initially scares a person, but ultimately is thrilling and worthwhile. In the end, Hannah decides to take a chance and trust her initial feelings about Nick when she first saw him and acknowledged her overwhelming realization, “It’s him. In real life” (56). For the classroom, teachers can discuss not all one reads on the Internet is truth, nor is all information either fact or fiction; emotion and feelings are there, too, in various modes. Love has created a highly readable novel with multicultural characters in a multimodal reality who find happiness through tolerance and understanding in a complicated world.

A non-fiction and fully serious young adult novel available on the topic of self-worth and identity in the digital age, Jessica Fralin’s novel *#Stolen* discusses the darker sides to social media and takes on religion’s place in it. The author does an admirable job tackling religious ideologies and making them relevant and accessible to even the least devout reader. This is a novel that would have to be suggested with the caveat of notifying a student’s parents due to the heavy Christian overtones, but it should not offend any single denomination as the values of self-worth and pride should prove universal. In a recent article from *Young Adult Library Services* entitled “Those Kinds of Books: Religion and Spirituality in Young Adult Literature,” the author defends books with a religious tone saying, “The hallmark of young adult literature is its commitment toward offering stories that fearlessly present a picture of young adult life that is honest and accurate, allowing teenagers to visualize stories and characters that are true to life” (Auguste 38). Regardless of one’s religious preferences, through statistics and self-

evaluation questions, *#Stolen* has lessons for anyone who has ever gotten too focused on or caught up in a digitized self.

Fralin mostly discusses female adolescent issues, but also addresses male issues like the fifteen year old boy named Danny who “[b]y the age of nineteen, had become so obsessed, [he was] spending up to ten hours a day taking more than two hundred selfies” (56). She goes on to say that, thankfully, Danny’s suicide attempt failed “and he went on to receive treatment for technology addiction and a condition called Body Dysmorphic Disorder” (Fralin 56). The design of the book transfers easily into the classroom methodology as it has a mix of personal stories, facts, and discussion questions intended to alert readers to the seriousness of these obsessions and then guide readers through what they want for themselves. Fralin explains this early in the novel by expressing, “I love social media and I want you to love it too. But I know from personal experience that it will try to steal who you really are” (5). No matter how a teacher uses this book, either in its entirety or just the facts and questions as discussion or potential writing prompts, students will be forever more positively self-aware for it.

Also focusing on self-image, but primarily on bullying, specifically cyberbullying, Patty Blount’s novel *Send* is a complex story told from the bully’s perspective after the tragic results of one careless action of pushing *send* when he hadn’t considered the consequences. This issue starts being relevant in middle school when naturally self-conscious students feel as though all eyes are on them. Blount’s main character Kenneth reveals, “I’d killed a child – not with a gun or a knife or my hands but with words and technology” (37-38) because he decided to post an embarrassing picture of another twelve year old child who then took his own life. This book doesn’t make

excuses for what happened and in fact drags Kenneth through juvenile detention, physical abuse, his family having to relocate, intensive counseling, potential mental illness, and the fear he will never live a normal, guilt-free life. He learned through therapy and talking with people he respected, coping skills like running instead of harmful behavior. The plotline deals with real teen issues and offers basic skills on how to get help for oneself or others without preaching. Easily, this book could be used to open discussions on how words can hurt for topics like cyberbullying, LGBTQ, or the juvenile justice system, but it also allows for readers to consider, almost religiously, who really has the right to judge anyone else, or even themselves.

Moving into a non-fiction genre of digitally relevant literature, in the last year several autobiographic novels have been crowding teen shelves. From books like *I Hate My Selfie* by Shane Dawson, *In Real Life* by Joey Graceffa, self-titled work *The Amazing Book Is Not on Fire: The World of Dan and Phil*, to the quite popular *This Book Loves You* by YouTube multimillionaire PewDiePie, vloggers are turning off their cameras to instead write about their lives online and off. Undeniably, YouTube is a ubiquitous household term. It would be hard to imagine life without it at this point. For some “users,” it would be impossible to imagine. What may have started out as just something to do or as a place to escape to, quickly metamorphosed into viral videos and then career makers. Several vloggers (video bloggers, from web loggers) have found not just a passion, but a small fortune through their sometimes alter-egos as played out on YouTube. In his no-holds-barred autobiography *Binge*, Tyler Oakley shares stories with readers that many people would not even be comfortable recalling in their own memories. For this reason, it is unlikely that this book could be used in its entirety for classroom

purposes, however, it certainly gives adults a much needed reality check about what is popular and definitely being viewed and read by twenty-first century digital youth. Any of these titles could be used in parts with nonfiction paired articles for research projects of authentic learning activities to investigate the people, for example.

Self-proclaimed geek, author Ernest Cline creates a love story within a coming-of-age story to illustrate the virtual world of OASIS within the real world in his 2011 novel, *Ready Player One*. The main character, Wade, has spent his real life struggling from the loss of his parents and being hunted by a money-hungry corporation. Cline sets the novel in 2044, when the U.S. has degraded economically after thirty years of a recession, with global impacts like “the polar ice caps are melting, sea levels are rising, and the weather is all messed up. Plants and animals are dying off in record numbers, and lots of people are starving and homeless” (Cline 17). Basically, Cline forecasts a worst case scenario for the world and imagines that a massive online world, OASIS, becomes “an escape hatch into a better reality” and for Wade the programs through OASIS were “his playground ... preschool” and “a magical place where anything was possible” (18). Besides the political and environmental undertones, Cline creates a world of good guy youth who overcome the bad guy adults while also making sure readers understand the online world should only be for entertainment, very much like Cory Doctorow, who Cline also mentions in the novel. The god-like creator of OASIS, Halliday, reveals to Wade, ““as terrifying and painful as reality can be, it’s also the only place where you can find true happiness. Because reality is *real*. Do you understand?”” (Cline 364).

Another interesting idea in the novel is students who use OASIS for school since “[t]he real public school system, the one run by the government, had been an

underfunded, overcrowded train wreck for decades” (31) and now “every school was a grand place of learning instead of running a gauntlet of bullies and drug addicts” (Cline 31-32). Even though there is some mature content, it is handled mildly leaving just a story about digital reality versus real life for youth all over the world who come together to make the world a better place through tolerance, cooperation, respect and the ultimate video game final clue: “*Charity. Hope. Faith.*” (Cline 341). Novels like Cline’s merge digital literacy and digital ethics like NYU Game Center’s Zimmerman hoped because he believes, “The way we work, learn, communicate, socialize, romance, connect with our government, do our banking – all of these essential aspects of our lives are totally embedded in and dependent on complex systems” (Ray 196-197). Understanding how digital systems work, our reliance on them, and how we want to interact with them are crucial skills

Undoubtedly, Cory Doctorow, famed for highlighting the need for people to understand Internet freedom as an advocate and user of Tor, which “directs Internet traffic through a free, worldwide, volunteer network consisting of more than seven thousand relays to conceal a user's location and usage from anyone conducting network surveillance or traffic analysis” (“Tor”), has been the role model of some of today’s more popular techno-geek writers, like Ernest Cline. In Doctorow’s novel *Little Brother*, whose title is an allusion to Orwell’s Big Brother from *1984*, the main character, Marcus, a.k.a. w1n5t0n (Winston), is a computer whiz kid who seemingly falls into a conspiracy that is beyond his years, though by novel’s end he proves otherwise. Immediately, the reader sees the *us* (kids) versus *them* (adults, particularly government and military officials) theme emerge as Marcus spends much of his time first in the principal’s office, then in

custody of the DHS because he understands and can and does manipulate to his advantage the complex computer systems used by these authorities.

The novel ventures into the controversial topics of government control, military power, and the rights of the individual. Though these issues may seem fairly highbrow for many selfie-crazed adolescents, there are many young people who experiment with technologies that can have unforeseen legal ramifications. Whether it is illegal downloading of music, movies, or copyrighted materials, there are risky behaviors that some adolescents will involve themselves in due to the anonymity the Internet can seem to provide. Doctorow also explains to readers that copyright laws have a cultural bias as “in Egypt, where they’d host anything for free so long as you’d put it under the Creative Commons license, which let[s] anyone remix it and share it” (225). Clearly understanding copyright and plagiarism laws is beneficial to secondary ELA students, but many teachers may not be aware of the cultural differences of these laws internationally as interpreted by students not initially raised in the U.S.

British vlogger Joe Sugg created the graphic novel, *Username: Evie*, about a bullied girl whose father was somewhat of a computer coding inventor. The dad creates an online safe haven in the event that his daughter needs it since the illness he is suffering from is fatal. Though she first tries coping with her stresses by closing herself in a refrigerator, she realizes she needs to try to find a less frigid option. She has a family member who is her main tormentor, especially when her father dies and Evie is forced to move in with cousin Mallory. Almost reading like a Cinderella story, Evie trusts the program her father established for her, only for it to be ruined by the evil cousin who enters it accidentally. When the story resolves, amidst graphic novel action scene after

action scene, Evie returns to school and her non-virtual life, explaining to a friend, “I’ve been lost in my own world for a while, dealing with things. Now I’m back and looking at life in a whole new light” (J. Sugg 177). The fact that this was written by a YouTuber and discusses escaping into a digital world rather than facing life’s challenges makes it worth the read. Educators must take the opportunity, as professor and a cofounder of the Institute for Research and Learning John Seely Brown hopes, for “a balance between IQ, SQ, or social intelligence, and EQ, or emotional intelligence” since “schooling tends to focus only on IQ” (Ray 204). The appeal of a graphic novel for many students might make reading it more accessible and opens up an artistic assessment option as well, since it activates through reading and imagery social and emotional intelligence with logic.

Very much like Joey Sugg’s graphic novel, Cherie Priest has developed a mixed media novel of narrative and webcomic art with a moderately intense tone called *I AM Princess X*. In this novel, instead of using the Internet as a means for escape into another reality, Princess X is trying to use it to come back to reality after a car accident and, the reader finds out later, actually an abduction. It is a story about friendship and really knowing someone which allows two lost friends to find each other again through the omnipresence of the Internet. When May comes across this online comic with Princess X, who she believes is her dead friend Libby, she contacts them by phone to “find out who is behind the website” to which their IT specialist replies, “*Nobody* knows who’s behind it. It’s one of the great mysteries of our time” (Priest 57). There is a perfect mix of the online comic blended with pages of an urgent cyberthriller where May tries desperately to find her best friend. That challenging search full of hints and clues along with May’s

unwavering hope keep even the most distractible reader satisfied in a unique tale of Internet as life-saving liaison.

In possibly the best overall mix of all aspects of digital young adult novel, Sean McGinty writes *The End of Fun* which discusses personal and family drama mixed with examples of a brain not on drugs, but on “the Internet.” The way the main character’s mind hops from idea to idea and the writing incorporates texting, FUN (trademarked) logos and YAY! ? BOO! buttons, as in any social media’s type of comment button, with dialogue from the other characters in the story, will require the reader to keep a sharp focus. This novel can be informative to adults who may not fully realize the developmental changes that are occurring in young adults’ communication habits and preferences in the digital age. An example of the complications surrounding the game, which can sound eerily similar to any customer service contact in 2016, is when Aaron tries to leave the game and as he explains, “To even be *allowed* to file an application for Termination, I have to get my YAY!s back up to +100. Which is crazy, but what can you do? So here I am. And if you feel like throwing me a YAY!, that’s awesome” (McGinty 1). Though Aaron is quite good at interacting daily with FUN, as it seems is what most people do, he wants out. Another character agrees, saying, ““That everyone I know who is having fun acts like a complete zombie and therefore I don’t want to be having FUN”” (47), to which Aaron completely agrees. Computers are supposed to make life easier and more FUN, as long as you play the game, and Aaron wants out. The novel has strong language and emotional content, but does depict an accurate view of what life addicted to the Internet could become, for better or worse, depending on one’s opinion.

With the ease of access to so much information in a culture immersed in the Internet, “[s]till another value of young adult literature is its capacity for telling its readers the truth, however disagreeable that may sometimes be, for in this way it equips readers for dealing with the realities of impending adulthood and for assuming the rights and responsibilities of citizenship” (Cart). Youth need to understand that more than ever, their actions have far-reaching consequences which have permanence. Fan and critically lauded author John Green adds about young adult literature, “The great strength of our children’s and YA genres is that we’re broad—we publish thousands of books a year ... Coe Booth, M. T. Anderson, Stephenie Meyer, Sarah Dessen, and Ellen Hopkins share the shelf. We’ve got poetry and sci-fi and romance and so-called literary fiction; we’ve got standalones and series and graphic novels and every subgenre imaginable” (21). Young adult literature awards are more in line with the popular vote , not just critics’ opinions, as “[t]his year’s Printz winners included a romance, a futuristic fantasy, a violent fairy tale, a boarding-school novel, and a dystopian thriller” (Green 21). Through these titles, young adults can question, try on, evaluate, adopt, or abandon personalities, skills, or morals before they have to be labeled by these challenging choices in the real, digital world.

In a teacher education article “Strategic Selection of Children’s and Young Adult Literature,” the authors advise teachers:

To effectively meet the needs of students as individual readers and the requirements of curricula and standards, we believe that teachers must take into account their own personal and pedagogical responses, the aesthetic possibilities of a book, text complexity, and the visual elements

of a text, all within the context of their own classrooms. While this may seem a daunting list, the outcomes of helping students develop into aesthetic and efferent readers make this effort a worthwhile endeavor.

(Jimenez and McIlhagga 56)

They believe as well that compiling novel lists “readily available to teachers and parents from sources such as authors, bloggers, teachers, and publishers” proves a worthwhile endeavor “to support both student achievement and development of independent engaged readers” (Jimenez and McIlhagga 51). The only potential drawback might be more outside of the prescribed curriculum reading and research. However, once the initial list has been created, using sources like the previously mentioned as well as student recommendations, book seller favorites, or library sites (The Toronto Public Library online teen section is quite current and admirable) will quickly form connections to new titles by genre and popularity. The teacher’s reward for the extracurricular research and reading will be well worth it when a student explains how the book chosen by the educator specifically for him or her felt like a friend who helped the student find the strength to deal with cyberbullying or to realize and overcome social media self-image addiction issues, for example. Therefore, using young adult literature in the secondary English classroom to navigate adolescents’ digital realities results in the ideal confluence of digital literacy and digital ethics blending for optimal student learning and success.

Chapter 5. Implications for Further Study

Without a doubt, educators and researchers have not seen the height of the progressions in technology or its uses, nor have all aspects on both the positive and negative arguments for technology's uses been revealed. With each new device, program, or application, new challenges in digital literacies and digital ethics will emerge. At the very least, more young adult literature titles either alluding to or directly discussing digital literacy and digital ethics will likely be published as the boon of the YA genre is still thriving. As such, further study and evaluation of new literature, print, ebook, or online, will be necessary. As topics evolve, so too will opportunities to adapt and create classroom methodologies to maximize on student learning potential. Hopefully, more research will also be conducted on what teaching literature can look like using more modern, relevant titles and on the effectiveness of using literature to communicate digital literacy and digital ethics with independent and group reading. Questions for research here can be: what does the student who has read about digital literacy and digital ethics do differently than one who has not? Does the young adult literature assigned as a class reading selection versus as a choice reading novel impact learning? Would class discussion or blogging versus one-on-one teacher/student journaling impact or improve learning?

A study on or literature review of digital literacy and digital ethics as one and the same but defining them separately at first should also be considered. At minimum, pedagogy has to be evaluated to make recommendations for curriculum changes. An interesting angle on pedagogy might be to study whether or not educators should teach to the digital student or maintain current methodologies with more modest digital usage. In

other words, how much should educators change how and what they teach versus *should* they attempt to fully embrace digital instruction as much as possible? An understudied area of the effects of digital media and device use is the profound impact they are having on the development of the adolescent brain. Certainly, longitudinal studies of both the short term and long term effects of digital use on the neurological functions of youth are needed. Would, then, recommendations be made to caution adolescents on the effects of their brain development based on the amount of time they spend on digital devices?

Other questions for consideration and study based on a review of current literature are: why aren't educational institutions changing to reflect digital cultures? Is digital culture not advancing or is it that institutions just don't *think* digital society is advancing, so they are figuratively holding down the fort until society comes back to its non-digital senses? There is so much digital opportunity in all facets of society that the mainstream may not realize the enormity of it all – good and bad – so the more research and study the better. Since some “critics say that a child's most formative experiences can actually occur during periods of low intellectual stimulation—in other words, when the child is bored” (“Children’s”), it could be inferred that putting highly stimulating digital devices down in favor of a low resolution book, might be more than just a good idea.

Another thought in considering the potential pedagogy of educational institutions is whether schools want to encourage students to try independent online learning options like Open Culture or MOOCs for immediate learning goals like badges or certifications and simply for pleasure as a lifelong learning plan. Researchers and experts in digital technology are using a “crowdsourced research project” to answer the question, “How can digital technologies support young people to engage socially and economically with

their communities?” so that they can provide support for how “to re-engage young people in building an inclusive, healthier, more equal and economically viable society” (Wilcox). Classroom teachers could also consider crowdsource surveying the classroom population and/or parents as “crowd” for survey purposes.

There are a wide variety of new or emerging websites, literature resources, mixed media like podcasts or interactive texts, research reports, and social media sources that educators should avail themselves of on a regular basis. Even if teachers do not or cannot incorporate these resources in their classrooms, it is almost guaranteed students will be investigating them on their own. Having a working knowledge of what digital and technological students’ interests are can allow teachers to make learning connections even within current curriculum design. Some resources to consider for at least browsing could be the use of “photo essays” or the idea of “the Death of Print” (*Young ix*), as Cart suggests, as well as websites like Archive of Our Own (AO3) which is a massive fanfic site. Though the topics on AO3 may be initially youth oriented, evaluation and selection for classroom use must be highly and frequently screened. Tumblr is an excellent online gathering place for artists, even text book companies have pages, but again needs much supervision and screening before open use would be recommended. Sites like Creepy Pasta have online horror stories for more mature audiences while Scholastic’s Skeleton Creek has a much younger audience in mind for its interactive print and online spooky stories.

According to young adult novelist John Green, “We need to grow the breadth and diversity of YA literature. We need to get more books to more kids so that publishing doesn’t become a business driven entirely by blockbusters. And we need to preserve the

roles—critics, librarians, professors, teachers—that contribute so much to the continual growth and change in our genre” (25). This is where the classroom English teachers in conjunction with their school librarians can really impact the success of valuable literature regardless of its pop culture appeal. Green hopes if those adults “will continue to recommend them,” the young adult literature “genre will go on” (23).

Secondary ELA teachers could benefit from combining forces with librarians by staying involved in the ways libraries are evolving. In a time where print books seem to be less popular, libraries are looking to adapt and offer digitally relevant resources for educators. In the Update article from a 2013 American Library Association, their “President Maureen Sullivan is among the faculty slated to speak at ‘Library Leadership in a Digital Age,’ a symposium to be held ... at Harvard University's Graduate School of Education in Cambridge, Massachusetts” (“Update”). This symposium is still being held in 2016 with focus questions to be answered like: “What will learning look like in the future and how will libraries need to respond? How must the role of the library be reimagined as new digital media, resources, and services expand and sharpen? What new opportunities — digital and otherwise — exist for libraries to become architects and purveyors of intellectual communities in ways that heretofore were not possible?” (“Library”). It is important to know that libraries can and hope to become an integral part of digital literacy and digital ethics awareness and collaboration. If teachers and librarians work toward a common goal with book selection, topical presentations, after school activities, and adolescent community development opportunities, libraries can remain a valuable future resource.

It would also be prudent for teachers to investigate Twitter pages and websites of various occupations and professionals to see what is expected of their “About Me” or as Troy Hicks labels it, “Other spaces in my web presence” where he lists as hyperlinks six of his additional online “spaces” like his wiki, Linked In profile, and a Zotero, a researcher’s website. Dan Richards’s “Digital Ethics” article emphasizes “in the sense that profile pages on social media sites literally figure as constructions of the self, as digital representations of character -- of Aristotelian *ethos*,” teachers and students must be able to answer the questions: “*Who am I?* Click on the About link. *What social and political organizations to I ascribe to?* Check my Groups and Likes. *What activities do I engage in?* Browse my photo albums. *With whom do I associate?* Scroll my friends list. *What are my beliefs?* Read my status updates.” These questions might possibly be the most important literacy and ethics questions teachers can pose to their students in the age of digital communication.

At the end of all research and study on digital literacy and digital ethics, it is often wise to return to the beginning of the search. Referring again to Rosenblatt, she explains about her own work, “I have constantly been energized by the tacit belief that language engages the whole person and can enable us to reach out beyond ourselves as we make the choices that compose our lives” (ix). Further, her words not only echo the past, but prophesize the future when she wrote, “In our tumultuous, changing world, beset by poverty, pollution, and war, unthinking, ready-made responses are dangerous. Sometimes we must choose between alternative positive values, such as security and freedom of speech” (Rosenblatt ix). Though the challenges Rosenblatt names from her experiences may not be word-for-word the difficulties digital age youth struggle with today, there is

no mistaking the underlying message that what our children are left to discover without guidance may prove disastrous if ignored. English language arts teachers now more than ever must educate themselves and then their students on the myriad, ever-evolving digital literacy and digital ethics challenges to create a future where informed and deliberate use of digital devices and media are part of the standard curriculum pedagogy.

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