



# Ambassador Digital Leadership

You have tools at your fingertips to communicate and find information at lightning speed. You can research, read the news, find upcoming events, and learn new skills. Digital tools and technology like apps and computers lift the barriers of time and distance, allowing you to connect with people all over the world.

In this badge, explore how you can use technology to build community. **Digital leadership** is when you use technology to inspire and guide other people. It's also how you take care of yourself and others online. Digital leaders can include everyone from a community organizer to a world leader to you!

## Steps

1. Explore your digital landscape
2. Examine digital bias
3. Advocate for your community
4. Create content for change
5. Evaluate and expand your impact

## Purpose

When I've earned this badge, I will know how to use technology to lead and inspire. I'll also know how to make the internet and world a better place for myself and others.



# Words to Know

**Algorithm:** A set of instructions. When coded, they're computer programs.

**Artificial intelligence (AI):** Computer programs that make decisions or recommendations based on what they have learned from their experiences with data.

**Bias:** A belief or opinion that affects how we perceive and treat others—it can be an aversion or a preference.

**Data:** Another word for information.

**Digital community:** Who and what you interact with online, including people and organizations.

**Digital content:** Something created for or shared online, like a video, meme, or online presentation.

**Digital footprint:** The trail of what you do online. It's generated automatically when you move around and act in the digital world. It includes the people and causes you follow, the apps you use, and the networks you're a part of.

**Digital landscape:** All the things you do with technology, including the devices you use (like smartphones, tablets, or computers), the platforms or tools you use (like websites, apps, social media, email, and messaging), who you connect with, and anything you do to put a message online.

**Digital leadership:** When you use technology to protect yourself and inspire and guide other people.

**Hashtag activism** or **slacktivism:** Online activism that creates a lot of talk, or “likes,” but may not create change or progress in the real world.

**Misinformation:** Information that's incorrect or false but presented as true. It's often created on purpose and spread digitally.

**Social engineering:** A cyberattack strategy that attempts to manipulate or deceive a user so that they give up their personal information.

**Stereotype:** A characteristic or trait—whether positive or negative—that is associated with an identity group. It is often an oversimplification or exaggeration about the group.

# Step 1: Explore your digital landscape

Your **digital landscape** is what you do with technology, from the devices you use (like smartphones, tablets, or computers) to the platforms and tools (like websites, apps, social media, email, and messaging). It's who you connect with and anything you do online.

Many things you do online can leave a **digital footprint** with data or information about you, like who you follow, what apps you use, and what you search for. This happens automatically when you move around the digital world. Sometimes, businesses can use your data to market their message or product to you. That's called **social engineering**.

Since you don't always know who's on the other side of a device, it's important to keep you and your data safe. And by finding people with similar goals and interests, you can create a **digital community** of people to learn, share, and act together.

## Choices—Do one:

**Design a flowchart.** Create a flowchart that shows how you move around the digital world. Add people you interact with, information you search for, videos watched, songs streamed, and anything else you do. Look at your finished flowchart: Where can you take control of your online experience? Where can you be more intentional in digital spaces? For example, if you spend a lot of time on social media, purposefully post positive messages and information. If you're easily distracted by pop-up ads, learn how to block them and share that tip with your digital community.

**Make a digital pledge with friends.** Brainstorm with friends and decide how to support one another online. Discuss how you use technology with questions like, "Do you use social media? What do you use it for? How does it make you feel?" Go deeper and discuss how different platforms, different times of day, or different periods of time impact how you feel. A lot can be learned when you talk about technology, so open up with your friends: is technology relaxing, stressful, helpful, or all three? Then decide how you'll pledge to work together and keep your digital community friendly and safe.

**Track technology's impact on your mood.** Fill out "My Digital Data Tracker": What was your mood before and after each digital experience? Maybe you learned something new and feel motivated to act. Perhaps you saw photos of friends and feel like you're missing out. Analyze your data and decide which sites, social media accounts, or content affected your mood in positive or negative ways. Go deeper and investigate how duration online or the time of day can impact your mood. Make a plan to focus your digital experiences on ones that make you feel good—even better if they can help others!

Fill out "My Digital Data Tracker" on page 4 to explore your digital landscape. How can you use technology more intentionally? How can you use it to build a better world for yourself and others?



# My Digital Data Tracker

Device(s) I have or use:

☐ Phone   ☐ Tablet   ☐ Computer   ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Time (start and end)	Device	Location	Platform: app, program, or website	What did you do?	What data or content did you share? With whom did you share it?	What was your mood before? And after?

**Surprised by your data?** Check out the tips on page 5 for ideas to stay safe and take care of yourself online.



## Check In with Your Digital Wellness

Taking care of yourself is important in the real world and the digital world. Here are some tips to stay safe whenever you use technology:

- **Understand your screen time.** The settings on an app or device can tell you how much time you spend on it. If you're surprised by what you find, look for more balance between the digital and real worlds. Many devices and apps let you choose the amount of time you spend on them. You can also mute notifications when you're enjoying the real world!
- **Safeguard your data and devices.** Don't share personally identifiable information that can be used to identify, contact, or locate you, like your address or password. Keep your technology updated, and change your passwords regularly. Use a secure Wi-Fi connection and turn off location services when you don't need them.
- **Think before you click.** Don't click on links or attachments from strangers. Consider what you're looking at—beware of any offer that sounds too good to be true, like new products for cheap prices. The same logic goes for images: if the person looks perfect, the photo is probably not real! You're also only seeing a glimpse of time instead of the whole picture.
- **Check in with your feelings.** How do you feel after you've been online? If you're feeling down or worse than before, adjust the way you experience the digital world. Find platforms and people that connect with your interests and make you feel good.
- **Take care of yourself and others.** If you're having a hard time, online or offline, reach out to someone, like a relative, troop leader, or teacher. They can support you to find help and make sure you're safe. You can also be supportive to others. If you see something concerning, remember that a text, call, or message can go a long way! If needed, reach out to a trusted adult or call 911.

## Step 2: Examine digital bias

Everyone has their own point of view. It's shaped by your experiences, environment, and personality. Your point of view, in turn, shapes how you interpret experiences and information.

Our point of view comes out online and offline. For example, **bias** is a belief or opinion that affects how we perceive and treat others—it can be an aversion or a preference. Sometimes we know our opinion or belief is biased; that's known as conscious bias. Sometimes the bias is unconscious, which can lead us to instantly connect stereotypes or attitudes with certain groups of people based on their identity. Online, this could be something like a body positivity account that only features people of one body type.

All digital content is created by people with their own viewpoints and biases. Think about ads or products for women that only come in pink—that's a stereotype. A **stereotype** is a characteristic or trait—whether positive or negative—that is associated with an identity group. It is often an oversimplification or exaggeration.

Much of the digital world is created with **algorithms**, or sets of instructions. They recommend videos, search for information, and analyze data. Even algorithms can have a point of view, be biased, or be affected by stereotypes, because they're written by people.

Monitoring what you see and share online is an important part of digital leadership. For example, **misinformation** is information that's incorrect or false but presented as true. It's often created on purpose and spread digitally. Make sure the messages you share are positive, helpful, honest, and inclusive. By thoughtfully managing your digital landscape, you can make it safe, kind, and fair.

### Choices—do one:

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**Create an inclusive, diverse, and bias-free world.** Look at your digital landscape. What are people sharing? Can you find a variety of voices and viewpoints? Identify examples of bias, stereotyping, misinformation, or anything else that seems negative. How can you make your landscape a more inclusive place? Take steps to be more intentional in the digital world. You might report, mute, block, or unfollow accounts. You might find accounts that align with your values or offer new perspectives. You might do something to make the internet a more inclusive and safer place, like advocating for body positivity or voices from people of diverse backgrounds.

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**Make a skit or video for younger Girl Scouts.** Digital leaders teach others how to make the internet a safe and friendly place. Act out and share the importance of thinking critically online with younger children. You might explore how comparing yourself to people online isn't fair. You might share what it feels like to see people who look like you in online images that are hurtful or talked about in a mean way. Explain any terms and include examples children can relate to, like how easily a photo can be edited or how misinformation can be spread as gossip at school. Give tips to stay safe online.

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**Explore social comparisons.** Filtered photos and people only posting highlights can create a pressure to be perfect. However, they really give us one small and often glamorous glimpse into someone's life. It's normal to want to compare yourself to others, but doing so may not be helpful. To explore, look carefully through your accounts, platforms, and other places online. Note any examples of bias, stereotyping, or misinformation you find, like edited images, posts, or portrayals of people that only give part of the story. Consider how what you see makes you feel. How could it impact what other people think about themselves or the world? Then find ways to get rid of the negative messages or comparisons, like muting or unfollowing accounts.

# Dig Deeper into Algorithmic Bias

You might not expect that a computer is biased because it's a machine, but like anything created by humans, computers and other technology are susceptible to the same biases as the creator.

Bias can exist in the message that's being shared and also within the platform sharing it. Some algorithms tell the computer what to do with data—what to search, what to flag, or what to recommend. If the person writing the code has a bias, conscious or unconscious, they might write a biased algorithm. Or if the data computed by the algorithm is biased, then the result will be biased, too.

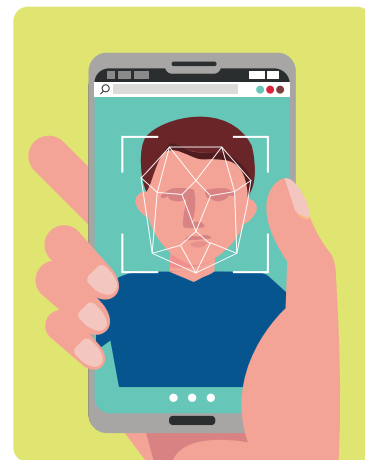
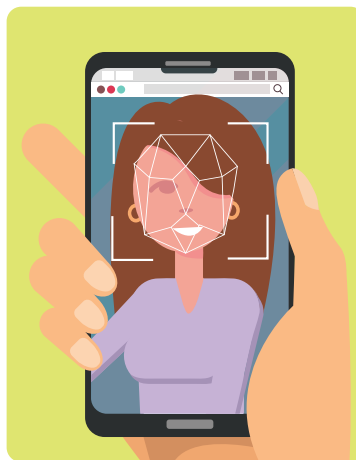
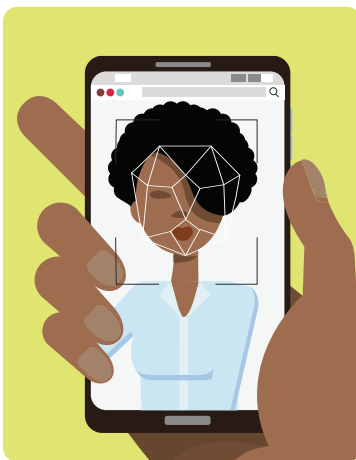
This matters because algorithms are used to create **artificial intelligence (AI)**. AI programs make decisions or recommendations based on what they have learned from their experiences with data. If the data put into the algorithm reflects systemic bias, like specific standards of beauty or expected activities for different genders, then the algorithms will perpetuate that bias.

For example, facial recognition programs are created using thousands of photos of people. If it doesn't

occur to the creators to include photos showing a diversity of people, the algorithm might be biased by age, race, skin color, ethnicity, body size, or gender. If the initial algorithm was created using photos mostly of adult men or mostly white people, it would then have trouble recognizing the faces of women, kids, and people of color.

Algorithmic bias might just seem annoying or frustrating when it recommends music or movies you don't especially like. But what about more important issues? What if a dating app had bias built in? Or if your spam filter mistakenly blocks all emails from colleges or potential employers? How might bias in technology negatively impact our educational, health, and legal systems?

Because AI is so widely used, algorithmic bias has the potential to impact whole populations of people and perpetuate historic injustices. Tech companies are exploring how they can best remove bias from algorithms and AI. You can also be thoughtful and observant of the apps and programs you use and watch out for potential bias.



# Be a Leader Online and Offline

## **Control your privacy settings.**

On many platforms, you can reach different audiences, like close friends, a community or group, the public, or just one person. You can make your account private so only people you're connected with see what you share.

## **Be in charge of what you see and share.**

Manage the conversation on content you share and remember that you can mute, block, and unfollow. You can also report bullying or content and accounts that don't follow the guidelines or rules.

**Review your connections.** Let go of negative content to make way for new people and ideas. Find others who share your interests to expand your digital landscape.

**Reach for help.** If you're feeling sad or angry, reach out to someone you trust. If you come across something concerning from a friend, like a sad meme or angry posts, reach out, listen, and be supportive.

## **Uplift your digital communities.**

Celebrate other people's success and amplify what they do! Share and reshare things that are important to your digital communities, like causes, petitions, and new businesses.

**Collaborate with others.** Share information, raise awareness, and work together to envision a better future. You can organize, plan, and mobilize. You can ask those in positions of leadership to use their power and influence for positive change.

## Step 3: Advocate for your community

In the past, leaders relied on in-person actions like rallies and town halls to mobilize others. Today, digital leaders can share their opinions and raise awareness online. They can repost groups to donate to, petitions to sign, and actions to attend. Technology has increased their options and potential reach. Distance and location don't matter, and communication is nearly instant.

Being a digital leader means understanding that your digital actions can have real-world impact. What you share can have an impact on others, and what you see can have an impact on you. Scrolling, favoriting, and commenting can be fun, but it can also be useful. You can focus on things you care about, following individuals and causes that are important to you. You can share ideas with your network. You can uplift others. You can make plans, gather resources, find volunteers, and connect with your community.

## Choices—do one:

**Amplify others online.** By boosting the work of others, especially people who are most affected by an issue, you make the real world and the digital world better places. Look for causes or stories that inspire you. Can you verify that they're real, honest, and accurate? If you can, share them with your digital community. Collect reactions, shares, and any other feedback from your audience.

**Use digital tools to mobilize your community.** Search online for an in-person event to make a difference, like volunteering at a food pantry, attending a town hall, or going to a community service day in the park. Post about the event and invite others to join you. Encourage people to make a commitment, and use technology (like a calendar invitation or reminder email) to prepare, connect, and reflect together.

► **For more fun:** Host your own community gathering or action, in person or online.

**Examine leaders who are using their voices online.** Choose an issue and find digital leaders who are advocating to solve it. Explore their digital footprints: What do they post? What information or resources do they share? Who do they interact with? How do they amplify the impacted community? What makes their content engaging? Look for smart and effective ways they use technology. Then create your own best-practice guide.

# Step 4: Create content for change

Online activism sometimes creates a lot of talk, or “likes,” but not much real change or progress. That’s sometimes called **hashtag activism** or **slacktivism**. People might post support on social media, but not take the next step in the real world. Though many of our interactions take place online, there’s important work to be done offline. Getting people to take action in the real world calls for creativity and inclusivity.

So how do you motivate your community to move beyond talk and make a difference?

- **Bring your own talents to support what you care about**, like creating a performance to inspire and mobilize people or an infographic to share information about the cause.
- **Research and carefully craft your message** to support the people you’re trying to help and reach your audience most effectively.
- **Use digital tools strategically to further your cause**, like using your feed to uplift others already working on the issue or designing new digital content.

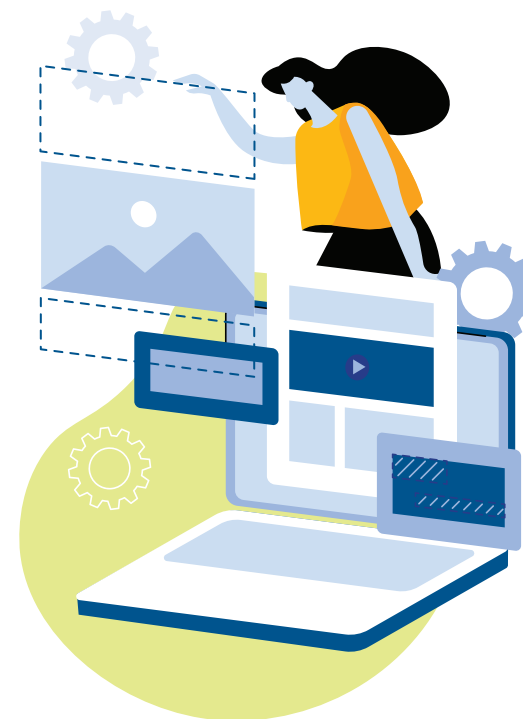
For Step 4, choose a topic you care about, like unhealthy messages about beauty and body image or the scarcity of books, grocery stores, or internet access in some communities. Find out what the impacted community needs and how you can support them. Explore the digital landscape and create original digital content that engages your digital community.

## Choices—do one:

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**Build a digital toolkit.** A toolkit is a set of tools, like those in a kitchen drawer or toolbox. Choose a cause or topic you want others to know more about. Find facts and resources to share, like articles, books, podcasts, and videos. Compile your research into a digital toolkit with activities and ways for people to get involved. Include messaging others can share to amplify the cause on different platforms. Share your toolkit widely to get others involved and work together to create positive change.  
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**Organize an online action.** The most effective actions are taken by groups, not single individuals. How can you collaborate with others to create change? You might ask people to share a message online all at once, quickly reaching leaders with power and influence. You might create a hashtag campaign to archive stories from people who have experienced bias or harm. Choose a format that’s engaging and accessible and that will mobilize others, online and offline.  
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**Make any digital content to create impact.** What cause will you support? Who will you work with? What digital tools will you use? Choose a topic, audience, and goal that combines awareness-raising with concrete action. You might include an online petition to share with community officials. You might moderate a live community forum or create a blog exploring different aspects of the issue.



Use “Your Checklist for Digital Impact” on page 10 to plan and create your content.

# Your Checklist for Digital Impact

As a digital leader, you want to create change in the digital and real worlds.  
Use this page to help you plan and build digital content that makes a difference.

## What?

## How?



**CAUSE:**  
**Research the landscape.**

Learn about the root causes of an issue you're passionate about and explore how the problem impacts different audiences. Find out what the facts are, what public opinion is, what the experts say, and who else is trying to help.



**COMMUNITY:**  
**Keep community at the center.**

Make your project something the community wants and needs. Find out what's important to them. How can you communicate about the problem and solutions in a way that feels good to the affected community? What language do they use? What message do they want to share?



**AUDIENCE:**  
**Know your audience.**

Decide who to reach with your content. You might want to directly help those impacted, engage the public, or focus on community and government leaders. Learn how the audience uses technology and more about their involvement with the problem. Are they helping or harming? What platforms do they use?



**PLATFORM:**  
**Choose your tools.**

What content will be appealing to the audience? Decide on a goal for what you want your audience to do and what digital content can support it, like a photo, video, or toolkit. Then choose online and offline channels to share it, like social media, email, and in person.



**MESSAGE:**  
**Decide what and how to share.**

Craft your message to create digital content for your audience. Include photos, text, facts, video, or anything else to motivate and inspire. Make your content accessible, written in a language that is relatable, and shared in places familiar to the audience.



**TEAM:**  
**Connect with others.**

Working with others can make your ideas even better. Who can make sure your message spreads far and wide? What skills do you each have to contribute?



**ACTION:**  
**Mobilize in the real world.**

Engaging content can build awareness, ask the audience to consider a new viewpoint, and give them information to act. But one social media post or documentary won't change the world! Make sure there's a call to action for the real world behind your digital content.



**IMPACT:**  
**Evaluate your content.**

Did your content have an impact? After you share it, collect data about the audience's engagement, such as likes, follows, clicks, comments, or other feedback. How can you improve what you did and expand your efforts? Use the data to grow the impact your digital community can have.

## Step 5: Evaluate and expand your impact

Change doesn't happen magically overnight. It comes from a coordinated series of small efforts that grow into something officials, lawmakers, and the public can't ignore. Organizers can use technology to engage new people, raise awareness, locate resources, and drive donations. They can collaborate, communicate, and imagine a better world.

Now that you've created digital content, review any data to evaluate how your audience engaged with your content. Look at comments, track participation rates and shares, and analyze any other indicators to understand your impact.

### Choices—do one:

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**Present your content.** Share your content from Step 4 with the people or group impacted by the problem (virtually or in person). Collect feedback to better understand how your content helped and what to improve. Listen to their reactions and take notes. Create another piece of content to better address what they need. Analyze any feedback. Did the new content better engage your audience? Did it better serve the impacted community?  
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**Launch a full campaign.** Use any feedback you received on your content from Step 4 to inspire a full campaign. Combine digital and real-world organizing and mobilizing tools to create a comprehensive approach. For each element you add, include a tangible action. Use tools that will reach your audience. Then analyze any feedback to understand the impact of your campaign.  
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**Choose a different next step.** How can you improve your content from Step 4 to have a bigger impact? Gather and analyze any feedback. What did your audience think? How did they respond in the digital world? Did they act in the real world? Decide what you can do to generate more action, online and offline, like share new content across multiple platforms or shift your audience. Use the data to inform your next step towards a better future for all.

## Social Media Helping Global Movements

Check out how people have used social media in movements all over the world:

**Anti-Violence Campaigns:** Social media has played a powerful role in raising awareness about violence based on gender, race, class, and age. Black Lives Matter, MeToo, and March For Our Lives all use social media to shine a spotlight on injustice and demand systemic change. It has been used to organize demonstrations and call for policy changes across the US and worldwide.

**Political Action:** In the early 2010s, pro-democracy movements spread across countries in North Africa and the Middle East, including Egypt, Tunisia, and Bahrain. Millions of posts, thousands of blogs, and thousands of videos spread a message of freedom and democracy. Movements all over the world use social media in the same way: to share a message and mobilize people for action.

**Natural Disaster Relief:** Social media can help people to check in with loved ones and organize on-the-ground relief after an earthquake, hurricane, tornado, or tsunami. Social media can be used to mobilize resources and ask for donations of time, money, or materials. It's been used in Haiti, Japan, the United States, and around the world to help those impacted by natural disasters.



Made possible by a generous grant from Instagram.

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First published in 2021 by GSUSA  
420 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10018-2798  
[www.girlscouts.org](http://www.girlscouts.org)

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Printed in the United States

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