

Digital Citizenship and Children's Rights in an AI Era

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Abstract

Despite being frequently referred to as digital “natives”, children remain excluded from the rights and recognition of full digital citizenship. Commonly regarded as incomplete human subjects, they are routinely left out of critical philosophical and political conversations about subjectivity, identity, and the redefinition of what it means to be human in the digital age. This paper argues for the importance of acknowledging children not only as passive users of digital technology but as active digital citizens, whose voices and imaginaries are vital to shaping the evolving sociotechnical terrain and including their perspectives in discussions about subjectivity.

Drawing on the educational program “Familiarization with Artificial Intelligence”, designed by ahedd DIH of the National Center for Scientific Research Demokritos and implemented as an interactive workshop for 5th-grade students at the Ralleios Experimental Schools of Athens University (Greece, February-March 2025), this study explores how children engage with AI as both a technological artifact and a social phenomenon. The program aimed to cultivate critical thinking around key issues of digitality by highlighting AI's ethical, environmental, and cultural dimensions, culminating in a series of science fiction essays, through which the students expressed their visions of the future.

Through their narratives, the children construct speculative storyworlds that reflect not only their grasp of technological concepts but also their deep, often philosophical inquiries into agency, ethics, and relationality. These stories can be framed as a manifestation of children's experiences and interpretations of the present by unraveling the values, morals, and emotions that shape their understanding of subjectivity in an increasingly digitized world. But most importantly, they hide a transformative quality: the creation and mobilization of alternative imaginaries as possibilities for the future.

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Short CVs

Eleni Tsatsaroni

Eleni Tsatsaroni is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Sociology at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens and a Researcher at the Institute of Informatics and Telecommunications, NCSR

Demokritos. Drawing on affect theory, she investigates human-non-human relationality and the emerging forms of subjectivity shaped by these affective interactions. Her research and practice are driven by a commitment to rethinking subjectivity more inclusively.

Amalia Giannoutsou

Amalia Giannoutsou is a researcher, educator, and pedagogical assessor specializing in differentiated learning strategies at the Ralleios Experimental Schools of Athens University. Her work explores the intersections of education and artistic expression, particularly the role of memory and imagination in children's identity construction and agency. She is interested in how children's engagement with storytelling encourages critical reflections on social transformation by producing alternative visions of identity, community, and the future.

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