



Greater St. Albert
Catholic Schools



Spring Community Conversation



St. Albert Catholic High School
33 Malmo Avenue, St. Albert
May 6, 2015 - 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.



Faith in Our Students!



Community Conversation Background Information May 6, 2015

“How can we prepare students to maximize the benefits of digital literacy so that they can make wise and healthy decisions with their online and social media activities?”

A recent report from the American Academy of Paediatrics found the average 8-year-old spends eight hours per day using various forms of media (including the Internet), and teenagers often surpass 11 hours of media consumption daily. More than three quarters of teenagers have cell phones and send an average of 3,364 texts per month.

Our question is twofold; “How do we turn this love affair of media and technology into learning?” and “How do we create the digital citizens of tomorrow?”

It is difficult for many of us to fully understand the power of technology today and the creativity of the human mind when it comes to the use of these new technologies. It is in developing the human mind, that the need for parents and educators is so important in the creation of good digital citizens. Technology can do many things, but it does not decide what is either moral or ethical about its use. That is the role of its user.

The following story from The One Laptop Per Child Foundation is a good example of students’ ability to use technology to learn and the need for instruction regarding digital citizenship.

Members of the One Laptop Per Child Foundation dropped Motorola tablets in two very remote Ethiopian villages where there was no schooling of any kind, no literacy in any language, no existing mobile or internet-connected technology, and no knowledge of English. The Android tablets were programmed entirely in English and were dropped into the villages in sealed cardboard boxes without instructions of any kind and given to children between the ages four to seven years old. It was expected that these children would just play with the boxes.

Within four minutes, one child not only opened the box, but found the on-off switch and powered it up. Within five days, these children were using 47 apps each. Within two weeks, they were singing ABC songs in the village, and within five months, they had hacked Android. Without any intervention from the Foundation staff, from adults or teachers or from anyone who knew English or even how to work a tablet computer, these Ethiopian children, on their own, learned like crazy from these devices.

The children learned to use the technology and, certainly learned new things as a result of its use. What was missing was the ethical use; hence they hacked Android.

In September 2015, GSACRD will roll out the “My Learning – My Device” initiative. Students in 100 district classrooms will be invited to bring their own devices to school everyday to use as a part of the learning process. Students will not be limited to the words in a textbook, they will be exposed to a world of information that they will have to learn to filter and use in a manner that respects the rights of all other users. Our schools will teach the curriculum and what it takes to be a good Christian digital citizen while keeping themselves safe in an ever-changing technological world.

