



**Cyber peace
begins with us**

Cyber peace in cyberspace: empowering youth for the safe and fair use of technology

by Princess Tutud

Technology has evolved significantly over the past few decades and so have the threats that cause harm rather than convenience. Cybersecurity enables users to operate computers and other digital devices safely and efficiently. All of us – even you – should engage in cybersecurity practices to protect our personal information, online activities and identities. The intersection of justice, peace and gender equity is often overlooked, resulting in limited promotion of fair use and contradicting the core principles of netiquette – understood as respectful and responsible online behaviour. As the world becomes increasingly reliant on digital platforms, with transactions and interactions moving online, cybercrime, misinformation and harassment disproportionately affect vulnerable populations. This article explores how youth engagement, gender equality and ethical practices can contribute to a secure and inclusive digital environment, alongside the growing accessibility of the internet and technology worldwide.

In the 21st century, cyberspace has become a double-edged sword, making the responsible use of technology especially important for young people.

It offers access to information, freedom of expression and innovations. At the same time, it exposes users to threats that are borderless, faceless and rapidly evolving – often outpacing human responses. As an actively engaged student from the Philippines, I have witnessed this firsthand, including breaches of official school systems and online platforms. This is a call to promote the responsible use of technology and to protect ourselves from unauthorized access – highlighting that cybersecurity plays a practical protective role in today's world.

Cybercrime leads to the absence of peace

Peace is a necessity for human beings. It is the presence of safety, dignity and freedom – both online and offline. When hackers attack hospitals through data breaches, or when information leaks undetected, vulnerabilities set in and threaten democratic institutions, nations and overall human security.

In Southeast Asia alone, digital crimes are on the rise. These are not just your “ordinary” IT problems



– they are crimes that destabilize communities and affect the population through mass media communication. We need more than just technical fixes or support from local IT services, we need to promote cybersecurity in all sectors, including education.

Cybersecurity is a matter of justice

Justice in cyberspace means upholding digital rights: the right to privacy, access to information and protection from cybercrime.

“Victims of online abuse often experience delayed justice as perpetrators benefit from impunity due to limited cyber forensic capacity and resources.”

Therefore, cybersecurity begins with all of us, and users can work together to strengthen cyber forensics through technological advancements.

As an aspiring law student, I believe justice systems must evolve to keep pace with constantly advancing technologies – not only to prosecute cybercrimes but also to prevent them through stronger frameworks, media and information literacy, cybersecurity education and public awareness. Cybersecurity is not just a technical field; it is an essential pillar of justice.

Bridging the gender gap in digital safety

The gender gap in cybersecurity is not about how women work in tech, but about who is most often targeted and labeled as vulnerable.

“Women and LGBTQ+ individuals face disproportionate online stalking, harassment and blackmail.”

As a result, individuals may withdraw from digital platforms or face account suspension, which limits their access to opportunities.

However, solutions are emerging to better protect women and the LGBTQ+ individuals from digital harm; there are programs around the world that empower women with digital literacy and cyber defense skills. We must invest in these efforts globally, not only to close the gender gap from structural marginalization but to ensure a safe cyberspace and inclusive for all.

Youth engagement in cybersecurity

Youth are often seen as impulsive users of technology, but they are also among the most agile defenders. Across the globe, young people are launching online safety campaigns and helping spread awareness about how to maintain a safe and fair use of technology. We understand how platforms work because we grew up with them; our insight is invaluable.

Media and Information Literacy is an applied subject in the Senior High School curriculum under the K to 12 Basic Education Programme of the Department of Education in the Philippines. It is taught in both public and private institutions. This subject encouraged me, as a participative student, to assess and evaluate information whilst promoting online safety in the process. Digital literacy is an important skill that all users must acquire to develop critical thinking. I was motivated, as a youth advocate for digital literacy, to help younger people become responsible digital citizens. I believe that helping citizens and shaping them to

become digitally literate brings cybersecurity and justice to light. I have seen school systems breached, and the administration struggle to retrieve learner and faculty information, as well as restore their reputation as institutions. Schools must secure their digital systems to maintain a safe and disciplined learning environment.

A call to action

Cybersecurity must be understood as a tool for peacebuilding and development, requiring a global commitment from all stakeholders, with the meaningful inclusion of women and youth.

“We are in need of gender-inclusive digital safety policies, strong legal and educational frameworks against cybercrime and digital literacy programmes in schools and communities.”

Cyber peace is not just an ideal to admire from afar; it is something we can advance through global cooperation.

Cyber peace begins with us. Our presence in this space is not optional. It is essential.

About the Author

Princess Tudtud is an aspiring law student and youth advocate from the Philippines, passionate about digital safety and youth empowerment. She has led school-based research and conducted interviews with professionals from SunStar Cebu, Cebu City Public Library and DAKILA – a Philippine Collective for Modern Heroism. Princess has also participated in local and educational programmes focusing on preserving cultural heritage and has contributed to promoting digital literacy and strengthening young people’s appreciation of history. Her writing reflects her vision and commitment to critical thinking.
