

# The Digital Demand

The importance of digital literacy is increasing while the implementation is lacking

## Unblocking Potential



STORY BY  
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**B**Y ALLOWING STUDENTS to explore the internet within reasonable boundaries, schools can guide students toward responsible decision making. “Tech Trends,” an educational technology journal, shows that students are given an opportunity to exercise their judgment and learn to make advantageous choices.

When students eventually graduate and enter adulthood, they will be expected to navigate the digital landscape without training.

Students will eventually encounter the full scope of the internet with its vast information, opinions

### DIGITAL DATA

**81%**

of kids in the US are digitally illiterate

**94%**

of schools use a filtering software

**SCAN TO**  
*practice your digital skills*



and risks. The American Library Association states, “The over-filtering creates barriers to learning and acquiring digital literacy skills that are vital for college and career readiness, as well as for full participation in 21st-century society.” The argument for looser web filters is not about abandoning responsibility, but rather about fostering it in a way that prepares students for the future and to be responsible digital citizens.

Topics like harsh cyberbullying, respectful communication and one’s digital footprint can be better understood by kids if they were able to use the internet with trial and error. To illustrate, in today’s interconnected world, collaboration often happens online for students and employees alike. Therefore, it’s essential for students to know how to safely en-

gage in online projects, social networking and collaborative learning experiences like workshops, which are incredibly common in the modern-day workforce.

Over time, these looser web filters will promote essential critical thinking skills and further allow students to properly traverse the Internet for credible, safe sources. A report by the Stanford History Education Group highlighted how students who encounter unfiltered information are forced to evaluate its credibility, prevalence and potential biases, developing critical thinking skills. The essential ability to discern reliable sources from misinformation is an important skill that students need. Having looser web filters on all school computers would help facilitate this. <sup>1</sup>

## J’s Advice



**Jacob Jagodzinski**  
Computer Science Teacher

Sources: American Association of School Librarians, School of Information Journal, Stack Overflow, Washington Post

### How do you use Computer Science in your own time?

“In my free time, I worked on building an app that helps me track different household tasks and reminds me of them.”

### How is Computer Science used in today’s society?

“Almost all fields use computer science. It might not be [for] creating things, but keeping track of everything on a day to day basis.”

### How can you start coding?

“Block based coding is the best place to start because the code editor is easy to work with: very user friendly. MIT App Inventor and Vexcode are [also] very good. That’s what we use for essentials.”

## Beginner Friendly Coding



**MIT App Inventor**



Used to build simple apps to be used with the mobile MIT App Inventor app.



**VEXcode VR**



Used with VEX robotics to control a virtual robot that augments reality.



**Codecademy**



Teaches text-based coding with a variety of languages to learn from.

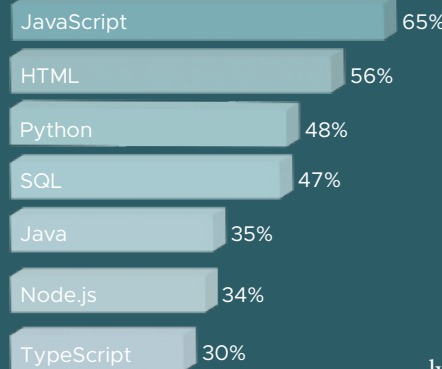


**Code.org**



Has “Hour of Code,” to learn the basics of block-based coding in an hour.

### Commonly Used Programming Languages



## Coding Your Path



STORY BY  
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**I**NTRODUCING MORE computer science elements to classrooms, both in technology and non-technology based classes, will provide benefits to daily life, jobs and future prospects. In our current society, everyone is constantly using technology, and being able to fluently speak the language of computers can make daily life much easier.

A computer program can easily sort through junk email, keep track of groceries and other daily tasks. The daily use of technology and computer science has led to a rapid-

ly growing need for them in many, many fields, and a noticeable gap has formed between the workforce’s digital skills and the demand for those skills. A September 2021 analysis by the National Foundation for American Policy found that there was a 15 percent increase in the number of job vacancy postings related to computer science and technology in a period of six months. Having a proficient understanding in computer science opens individuals up to more resources, such as job openings or information on the internet.

Even for non-technology based jobs, there is a need for technology education. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development’s “Survey of Adult Skills,” 35 percent of Americans do not have basic digital skills. However, having these basic digital skills can allow one to easily fix tech

problems by themselves. For example, once I couldn’t connect to the public library’s wifi because it required a login page. However, by using the link 1.1.1.1, I used Cloudflare’s public DNS resolver to solve the issue.

There has become more of a natural need for more computer science classes, computer science elements in other classes and a greater exposure to technology through looser web filters. Physically implementing this also isn’t challenging, as there are many common examples of using computer science in non-computer science related classes, including building a website, using artificial intelligence tools and automating tedious tasks using computer scripts. These changes would allow educational establishments to prepare their students for the rapidly approaching digital age which would improve the futures of students everywhere around the globe. <sup>2</sup>

### How do you feel about Ladue’s web filters?

**Eric Fan (11)**



“Sophomore year when I was researching drugs and gun violence for class, a lot of important websites I needed were blocked.”

**Lily Crabtree (9)**



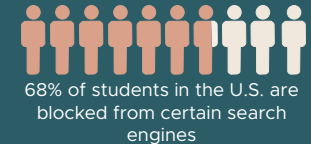
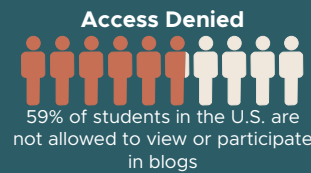
“They can be helpful [for] eliminating things like streaming services, but it can be frustrating when you’re trying to do something.”

**Tanvi Genti (12)**



“A lot of my debate research that is blocked [isn’t] necessarily harmful. If we were educated on most blocked sites, it’d be better.”

## On Web Filters



### Teachers feel filters negatively affect

