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### **Digital Rights, Citizenship, and Literacy in Human Resources: An Analysis**

The concepts of digital rights, citizenship, and literacy actively challenge our pre-existing beliefs of what it means to exist within society. Americans are born with innate rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, but our noble founding fathers did not live in an era defined by advanced technology, the vast expanse of the internet, or the monumental presence of social media. As these societal facets grow and develop, we are forced to evaluate what it means to be a moral citizen, how to participate in society, and what rights we are inherently granted all within the bounds of the digital sphere.

Defining digital rights requires analysis on what citizens are entitled to in the physical world primarily. These rights include, but are not limited to, freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and freedom of the press. Many feel they are entitled to safety and privacy as well, both on a social and governmental front. Transferring these tangible concepts to the unfamiliar world of the internet is challenging, however, rights to privacy, data protection, and access to information seem to cover these precious truths as a whole. Digital citizenship refers to how one actively participates in online spaces. In the real world, many define voting, involvement in democracy, and keeping up-to-date on national issues as healthy acts of citizenship. Online, good citizenship may look like respecting others' privacy, staying informed through media about current events, and protecting your devices via passwords. Digital literacy involves how one comprehends the information they view online. Being digitally literate requires the user to have a strong sense of discernment for media and

confirmation biases, the capability to spot both misinformation and disinformation, and maintaining an overall watchful eye when consuming all kinds of digital media.

In the field of human resources, this holy trinity of conceptions is utterly important to uphold and participate in. Although there are many specific fields under the overarching HR umbrella, maintaining digital literacy and understanding our rights and duties online is imperative. For instance, an employee that works in talent acquisition often must check the digital presence of the potential candidate before proceeding with the hiring process. These employees must be digitally literate, in the sense that they could spot any red flags on the candidates profiles like the spread of misinformation, poor behavior toward others online, or posts that are not safe for work. A compensation and benefits specialist must understand digital literacy as well, especially in their market research that determines company salaries or analysis of internal compensation data. An employee relations specialist must have a competent grasp on digital rights, especially when dealing with issues between employees in order to protect their privacy and safety.



As an aspiring human resources professional myself, mastering these three concepts is highly important not only to achieve success, but to ensure I am an employee that abides by

ethical and social standards both online and in-person. Also, as many positions in this field become remote or hybrid, the need for competence increases further. I consider myself to be digitally literate and a faithful digital citizen, but I will need to maintain and expand on these aspects of myself as our technology grows and advances down the line. Changes to this career field might include the hiring process becoming fully remote, as it is already happening in many companies. New software for onboarding may come into play and require employees to learn quickly and have the ability to uphold digital literacy and citizenship in the process.

In sum, technology has grown rapidly in the 21st century, and it is time we define the social landscape of the internet with concrete notions of rights, citizenship, and literacy. Human resources professionals must understand this and implement them fully into their work to ensure the wellbeing of themselves, their fellow coworkers, and their companies at large.