What I Want To Do, And What I Need To, Aren't Always Separate Entities

 My experience at the Atwater Library has been completely undefinable. I struggle to put into words how much the experience has meant to me, and the amazing time that I have had working here over the past six weeks. I have learnt something new everyday and I have spent it doing what I love.

I am a big believer that anyone can learn how to use technology. Most people already have some of the necessary skills without realizing it. We are working to give everyone the same tools, and by doing so help bridging the technological divide. However, everyone has something to learn, and technology moves at such a breathtaking speed that there is no one who can say that they don't have anything left to learn.

I had the opportunity to speak on CBC to promote the Creative Digital Media Workshop Series. While on air I spoke about the importance of Digital Citizenship, and how, just like in the real world, we have to teach people how to properly conduct themselves online. The importance of online communities is undeniable. In a society that is putting more and more of their personal thoughts and lives on the internet it is necessary to teach how to respect the person on the other side of the screen. We can form connections in a millisecond, forming relationships with people across the world, but we have to remember that there are people on the other side of the computer. Not just binaries.

One of the ways to do this is to teach Digital Citizenship. For every workshop we had over the past few weeks we opened the dialogue for ethical photo taking and sharing. By creating a fun medium to explore these topics in we were able to open the discussion in a way that everyone was comfortable exploring.

Not only is the ethical side of Digital Literacy important but so are the sheer amount of possibilities available to those who use computers. Creatively they can suit almost anyone's tastes. Allowing for development in projects that focus on poetry, photography and video, music, art, and literature anyone is able to spice up their work in a few hours. Digital art is often forgiving enough that beginners are also comfortable with making mistakes and trying new things.

Through Digital Citizenship we are working to build confidence, both online and off, and digitally is a great place to do so?There are many online communities that foster positivity and kindness.

We have had a diverse amount of people who showed up to all our workshops. We had people who were comfortable using their computers and cameras, and people who had never touched one in their lives. From children to seniors, everyone explored different forms of expressing themselves!

Leaving after six weeks, I can't help but relate my experience to my present self as an Honours English and Creative Student; as well as my future self, the author and Professor I aspire to be. There are very few jobs at my current level that could give me the experience I need for furthering my education and my future career. I want to spend my life doing what I love and the only way I can do that is by practicing, and building my practical knowledge. The Atwater Library has given me that opportunity. Rather then committing myself to a career path I didn't know for certain I would enjoy, I can commit myself to it knowing that I will love it. Interning at the library has shown me how much can be accomplished by hard work, and how rewarding it is to teach someone something new. Just like in the workshops where our goal was to learn skills that can be applied in daily life or to future projects, I have learnt skills that I will be able to use for myself!