Using the Digital Visitors and Residents App

What Determines our Engagement with Technology and The Web?

Chapter I:
Digital Natives and Immigrants

Here’s a thought: Maybe people who grew up with a technology use it differently than people who adopted it later in life.

The youngsters with their technology could be digital natives: They use the “language” of technology as a native language.

That would make everyone else a digital immigrant: With technology moving so fast, it must be hard for them to keep up.

Maybe it’s like the difference between a native and non-native speaker of a language...
Chapter II:
Visitors and Residents: An Alternative

When we use something on the Internet, our mode of engagement tends to fall on a spectrum.

Visitor - Resident

Visitor mode: We use something on the Internet without leaving any social trace behind. We use something as a tool to accomplish a task, and when the task is done, we put the tool away.

Resident mode: Our goal is social presence and connecting with other people. In this mode, we leave persistent social traces behind.

As we do things online, our modes of engagement can fall anywhere on the Visitor/Resident spectrum.

Visitor - Resident

But there’s another important part:

We often behave differently when we are using the Internet in a Personal context versus an Institutional (work-related) context.

Visitor - Resident

Personal - Institutional
If we combine it all together, we get:

Now, I’ll think about my various online activities.

When I use Google search, do it as a Visitor. It’s a tool that I use to search for things, and when I use it I don’t want to leave traces behind.

I use it at home (Personal), at work (Institutional), and everywhere in between. But no matter where I am, I always use it as a Visitor.

So I’ll put “Google Searches” here:

Facebark is where I hang out with my friends online. I’m a Resident because I leave lots of social traces as I interact with everyone.

But I keep my work life out of it, and only use it in Personal mode.

I’ll squeeze Facebark into the corner:
The way I use email is...complicated.

When I’m at work (Institutional), I use email to communicate work stuff with others, but I don’t really use it to socialize. So I’m more of a Visitor.

But when I’m at home (Personal), I use email to socialize with my friends. So I’m in more of a Resident mode.

I try to keep personal and work email separate, but sometimes I talk to coworkers when I’m off the clock.

...and my work email will go here:

...and there we have it!

The Visitors and Residents mapping exercise is a powerful tool for understanding how we engage with technology and the Internet.

It can help individuals understand their own behavior, and it can reveal patterns and archetypes within groups of people.
OCLC Research made an online app that you can use to make a Visitors and Residents map. We’ll show you how to do it!

Once you access the app, you will see something like the figure below. You can now start building your map by using the ‘New Shape’ button.

There are four different kinds of shapes that you can play with. Feel free to be creative!
You can move shapes around by dragging them with your mouse or fingers.

Touch or click a shape to show its controls.

The droplet button lets us change the shape's color.

The tabs around the outside let us resize and rotate a shape.

You can move shapes around by dragging them with your mouse or fingers.

We can change the text on the shape by using the middle button.

To get rid of a shape, we can use the red button with the ‘x’ on it.
When you are finished working on your map, press the “All Done!” button to save it.

You can now share your map via social media or email yourself a copy. Or, to change something, use your browser’s ‘back’ button to edit and resubmit your map.