Summary
This course aims to develop an understanding of digital citizenship to students and guide them in designing citizen-led digital projects that can address specific community issues that are data and technology oriented. The course enables students to explore and analyse their digital citizenship as well as take part in designing a technology project to address an issue they are passionate about. The project was divided into 2 parts: a critical analysis of digital citizenship and a practical tech workshop to apply the participants knowledge into hands on projects related to digital citizenship.

Project Description
How did you decide what issue(s) you wanted to address and what approach(es) or strategies you chose to implement in your project?

My current research is on the digital divide in communities and this was a need I saw within the literature and lived experience of residents. I decided on my approach with the inspiration of projects across Europe and Africa that build digital labs and bring local residents to design solutions for community problems.

Why did you choose your host site? In what ways did local relationships support you or contribute to the project?

We chose Ben-Gurion University and the WeWork space that the NGO is located in. The choice of BGU was to allow students to spend time and study in a space in which they will hopefully one day be a student if they continue working hard as they have been so far! Then the choice of the WeWork space is to also to expose students to the tech space by allowing them to work on their community tech projects next door to startups, microsoft, NVIDIA and other big tech companies.

The space acted as both a place of facilitation and inspiration for the students. My community partners were the architects of making all of this space come together.

What changes or adjustments did you make to your original plans, and why?

A lot of things changed in terms of the syllabus and teaching style. The more I understood the needs of the students from digital literacy variation in the class to the need for more hands-on learning opportunities as students got easily fatigued, I adjusted my methods.

Are there opportunities for continuing your work on this issue? If so, please describe

I'm working with my partners to find a way of establishing this program as a yearly project where MIT students come and work with Siraj NGO to teach future cohorts. I am also working on figuring out how to get students to come to the US for 2 Week Tech-Treks - part of a summer program where they can come to the US and explore the role of technology in society with US partners. As of now we are moving into Phase 2 of the program where students will develop their summer projects into established products that a community partner can use. Please contact me for more details. I'd love to chat!
Reflection
● How do you define peace?
Peace is co-liberation -- It is working to co-liberate each other from oppression that springs in evolving forms. Also, it is being able to live safely and in dignity with the ability to realise the life and future you envision. It is both the absence of violence and the full realisation of your human rights.

● In what ways might your project contribute to peace? What changes occurred? Short-term? Long-term?
It exposed students to futures and careers they have never thought of beforehand and connected them with a community organisation that works to ensure Bedouin youth complete university and encourages them to get into the space of technology. Already many of the students from the programming are planning to pick computer science as a major, which is incredible! Currently there are only around 50-100 Bedouins in the tech space and we are already seeing our students plan to enter the field. Furthermore, the program is currently continuing in other phases in-order to develop the participants skills and hopefully it will be an annual collaboration between MIT, BGU and Siraj. The alumni of DigitalTent have formed a student council who will be future community volunteers and teaching assistants to the program. Therefore, the long term impact will be the growth of this now evolving community project of getting youth into technology. Feel free to contact me about Phase 2 and 3!

● Has your project changed the way you think about the world? How has the project changed, challenged, or inspired you?
It has shown me that we can begin with change now and today. The ability to make change does not lie only with large top-down projects but it can also begin in small community spaces with a few good and dedicated people.

Personal Statement
The power of our collective was unlocked when we had passionate community leaders, university researchers and Bedouin youth come together in an intentional space designed to let us think beyond our short-comings and reach for the heights of the local youths' imagination about the future. DigitalTent was about unlocking the potential of youth to become digital leaders in their communities by bringing 'tech for good' to the classroom in a hands-on manner. It was like bringing a small piece of the MIT ‘Mens Et Manus’ (Mind and Hand) spirit to the Naqab.