

WHAT IS A DIGITAL FOOTPRINT?

A **digital footprint** is the collection of all the **traces** you leave in electronic environments as you use or move through them.

Active Footprint: Some is content you actively volunteer—like your Facebook, Instagram, Twitter profile.

Passive Footprint: like the **cookies** a site stores in your browser, the content your district collects about your use of their equipment, etc. All this data can be aggregated to build a profile of you and your behavior.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO THINK ABOUT YOUR DIGITAL FOOTPRINT?

1. Safety

If people know your personal information, they can create accounts in your name. Or if they know where you live, they can track you down. Not everyone out on the internet is good.

2. Future employment

Both employers and universities are reviewing digital footprints. They want to see what the “real” youth is like vs. the polished image seen in an application or interview

DIGITAL FOOTPRINT CHECKLIST

The question is not whether you are leaving a mark. The question is, “What kind of mark are you leaving?”

- Do the photos included in your digital footprint show that you would be a good employee/student/team member/citizen?
- Are the comments that you have posted on your pages and the pages of others appropriate (not overly negative, free of crude language, etc.)?
- Is the music and video on your site of your own creation or **copyright free**?
- Do the music and movie files that are part of your digital footprint portray you in a positive light?
- Have you only included your name and email address on your site? (not a home address, phone number, etc.)
- When participating in online discussions, have you done so in a positive manner?
- Would you be comfortable with a parent, mentor, employer, or college admissions officer viewing what is included in your digital footprint?
- Have you refrained from posting anything that could hurt another person’s feelings or reputation?

If your answer is “yes” to the questions above, then you are maintaining a positive digital footprint.

HOW DO YOU ENSURE THAT YOUR DIGITAL FOOTPRINT IS POSITIVE?

- **Be selective about what you put online** - You should post only information that you are comfortable with others seeing and knowing. Don't post anything to your site that would be morally or ethically questionable. The digital footprints you leave should lead to a positive image that you create and control.
- **Posting is permanent** - Once you post to the Internet it can be copied, saved, and used by others. You should think before you post anything online.
- **Private is never private** - There are ways to get around the privacy settings on your social networking site. Post only items you wouldn't mind your family, friends, employers, colleges, or the **police** seeing.
- **Monitor regularly** - Even if you control what you post online, others can post information about you. Perform regular online searches of your name to view any new information that has been posted about you. Ask that any photos of you that could be seen as unflattering be removed and watch how your friends use your name when they add you to their sites.
- **Use the Internet to your advantage** – Use online communication and tools to network. Share your knowledge and creativity in an E-portfolios. Engage in community action groups. Share your expertise and passions.

Work Cited

"Digital Footprint PowerPoint." Oak Ridge High School

"Digital Citizenship." Primary Tech by Kathleen Morris

WJAR, NBC 10. "Your Digital Footprint May Be Unflattering." YouTube,