Digital

What's in my Digital Footprint?

A digital device opens your door to so much opportunity and experience which may enrich your world!
But... once you're online, you will be leaving traces of your digital footprint! Indeed, whatever you post online is as if you were writing on a board with a permanent marker: easy to write but difficult to erase!

Discipline area	Digital Literacy
Topic	Digital Competence
Estimated time	2h 20'
Learning goals	If you go through the whole learning unit, you will • learn what a digital footprint is • increase your awareness about the dangers of posting and sharing information • learn how to have a positive digital footprint • reflect on how your online activities can affect your future and also learn about... • being safe online and • how to act responsibly online.

Warm-up

As soon as you go online, you start creating a trail of information about yourself.
That is your digital footprint, all traces you leave online. Especially what you say and do on social media shapes what people think of you, both now and in the future. Future generations might even look at it one day. Even things which are deleted, are frequently still on some server somewhere….

What you do online can also affect what people think about your communities too. That's why it's important to know what kind of trail you are leaving, and be conscious about the impact it might have.

It's the same as your actions in public spaces off-line, except for the difference that on-line it is easier for strangers to use them to cheat you, for example pretending to know you, or others, for example pretending to be you.

If you are on social media or have an account under your name on similar public platforms, you already have a digital footprint:

We ALL leave a digital footprint

Once it's on-line it's virtually impossible to scrub out

. . and the data on you will follow you around for life

Info on YOU

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Step 1

Make a list with your buddy of all the activities you usually do online.
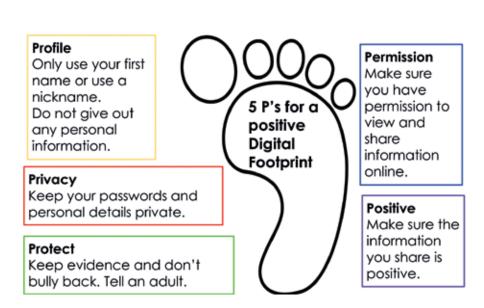Done?

Step 2

Now go into detail and think of what you have posted (pictures and texts): What pictures, messages or information aren't that safe? How can they affect you or others?

In case you have no digital footprint yet: discuss with your buddy, what information about yourself/ pictures you would post and what you wouldn't.

Learn

1

Have a look at this image. Here is an explanation on how to create a positive digital footprint.

Profile
Only use your first name or use a nickname.
Do not give out any personal information.

Privacy
Keep your passwords and personal details private.

Protect
Keep evidence and don't bully back. Tell an adult.

5 P's for a positive Digital Footprint

Permission
Make sure you have permission to view and share information online.

Positive
Make sure the information you share is positive.

There are at least three strategies you can use to keep your digital footprint appropriate and safe:

1. Keep all of your social media private. This prevents things you may post from everyone seeing them.
2. Avoid typing mean or disrespectful comments on others' pages.
3. Avoid posting anything very personal, or saying things that may be inappropriate. If someone in the future sees an old post of yours that may be questionable, they could possibly hold it against you.

How might your digital footprint affect your future opportunities?
Discuss this question with your buddy and write your reflections and ideas on this footprint or in the footprints that you yourself draw… maybe using one of your feet each as a stancil!

No ideas come to your mind?
Then think of these different situations: if you are applying for a job interview, if you become a popular politician, if democracy transforms into dictatorship…

2

Imagine you are being interviewed for a summer job. What questions could they ask you and potentially verify your answers online? Brainstorm some questions with your buddy and write a list of at least 5 possible questions!

Now ask your buddy these questions and evaluate their answers. **Double check the responses online**: do their answers match what you find on the Internet? Discuss with your buddy what online information you should change straight away and what you should pay attention to when posting info about yourself in the future?

What could possibly happen if I leave a digital footprint?

Create

1

Create a short leaflet as a guide to young people applying for a summer job. Make sure to include ways they can prepare for an interview by making sure their digital footprint is a positive one.

2

With your buddy, **create a 'spot the difference' cartoon**, where on one side you draw an invented social media profile which represents a positive digital footprint and on the other side the same profile as a negative digital footprint.

When you are done, pass it on to your friends so they can try to spot the difference between the two scenarios.

Reflect

With your buddy, write a letter to younger children to explain what challenges they must face to keep their digital footprints positive and that of their friends. If you want you can also create a keepsake for this, a message in a bottle, or leave it somewhere where future generations may find it.