Digital Footprint

What is it?

A digital footprint is the information about a particular person that gets left behind when they are active online or when someone posts information about them. A digital footprint is permanent.

How do we get them?

It is normal for everyone who uses the internet to have a digital footprint. We contribute to our own digital footprints through online activities such as photo sharing, dating, banking, shopping, gaming, professional networking and social networking. Even with the strongest privacy settings, your clicks and website visits leave data trails, creating your "digital footprint" that reveal a lot about who you are, what you do, and what you like and dislike.

Did you know?

● On average, 195 photos of children under 5 are shared online by their parents every year, that's almost 1,000 pictures online by age 5.
● On average, 208 photos of children under 16 are shared online by their parents every year.
● Only 49% of parents are aware that location data can be stored within an image.
● 53% of parents have uploaded photos of children that are not their own.   (source: Parent Zone survey of 2,000 parents in 2015)

Resources

My Digital Footprint – A Brief Guide – download the PDF
Frequently Asked Questions About Cookies – learn about them here
Manage Your Online Reputation – Watch the video
Clean Up Your Digital Footprint – get the checklist
Read about the first lawsuit between a child and her parents here

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Challenge: What events during your childhood are you glad didn't get documented? Yes, we're talking home perms, braces, plaid pants, 1980s hair, your punk phase, your shoulder pads, sweat bands and that full-length acid-wash jean coat…… What do we post online today that seems harmless but might embarrass or humiliate kids in the future?

"Sharenting"

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Older children and young adults want to be in control of their online identities. Unfortunately, most of them will come of age with a digital footprint crafted by others. Research on "sharenting" warns of parent oversharing in online communities--parents share their stories at the expense of their children's privacy--from picky eating and temper tantrums to toileting issues. Many have not considered the longevity and reach of the digital information they share. In some parts of Europe, adult children can take their parents to court for breaching their right to privacy as children by publishing photos of them when they were younger.

What is our role as parents and educators in crafting the digital identities of children? Will there come a day when grown up students resent what we have shared?