

Your Digital Footprint

Grade- 5-8



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Standard Alignment

G.U.I.D.E. for Life



Growth

Practice mindfulness



Decisions

Think through potential consequences

About this lesson

In a digital world and information sharing age, it can sometimes be hard to understand where privacy ends and where the real risks are. Everyone cares about their reputation, but many students don't know that what they do online can impact their digital footprint, permanently. In this lesson students will continue learning about the rights and responsibilities they have as digital citizens, and gain awareness of steps they can take to be safe and secure, and be empowered to make smart choices in order to remain in control of their digital reputation!

Material & Supplies

- Paper, poster and supplies to create posters (This could also be an electronics activity)
- Click here for **Your Digital Footprint** [Lesson Slides](#)

Lesson Objectives

- Identify what personal information should remain private, and what is suitable to be shared publicly
- Demonstrate good digital citizenship
- Explain how one's digital footprint can impact him/her in the future

Key Vocabulary

- **Cookies**- A piece of data sent from a website and stored in a user's web browser.
- **Digital Footprint**- The trail or history left behind by your interactions with the digital environment by your interactions with the digital environment including use of TV (on demand), mobile phone, Internet, email, texting, and social media. It can often be permanent. Online presence can also be measured by the number of people you interact with.
- **IP Address**- is a numerical label assigned to each device connected to a computer network that uses the Internet for communication
- **Malware**- software that is specifically designed to disrupt, damage, or gain unauthorized access to a computer system.
- **Spyware**- software that enables a user to obtain covert information about another's computer activities by transmitting data covertly from their hard drive.

Lesson Plan

1. Brainstorm! (Slide 4) Start by asking students to think about, then respond to, the following questions.

- "Why is your privacy important?"
- "Have you ever been in a situation when something private or secret of yours got out?"

Explain that this could involve people they know or don't know, online or offline.

Invite any students to share.

2. Project (Slide 5) Ask students to consider:

- “How do you keep private information private in the ‘real world’?”
- “How can you keep information private in the digital world?”
- “What information about you is being tracked, saved, and shared online?”

Invite volunteers to share and explain their rationale for both private and public sharing. Keep track of student’s responses on the board. Explain that while we can’t always see it, our online behaviors are being tracked and saved.

For example:

- Our browser remembers what page we visited for weeks and can even remember our passwords for us!
- Our search engine provides us with suggestions based on recent key words we’ve searched.
- Web pages we visit post advertisements for items we’ve checked out on other websites.

Some of this technology is helpful, but we need to be aware of when it is not.

3. Show the students the video [“Your Digital Footprint”](#). **(Slide 6)** After watching, invite the students to share their initial impression.

4. Ask: “What is your digital footprint?”

5. Distribute the handout [Sharing Online](#) and give students a few minutes to individually complete it.

- First have them think about the latest piece of information they shared with a friend or family member, or (if they meet age limit requirements) what they posted on a social media site
- Next, have them go through the steps to calculate the number of people they reached online. **Ask:** Did the results surprise or shock you? Why? What could be the negative implications of sharing information with so many people? Invite students to share their responses.

Discuss: “Could there be a positive side to sharing information?” Allow students to discuss.

For example: In cases of emergencies or good news, online sharing can spread important information quickly and reach a lot of people.

6. Deconstruct the Cookie Recipe **(Slide 7)**: or write the following riddle on the board and give students a couple of minutes to guess the answer:

- What sweet treat follows you around online? (Cookies)

Explain that our online behaviors are measured by something called **cookies** defined as a piece of data sent from a website and stored in a user’s web browser.

- o Often cookies are essential for the website to work. But sometimes a cookie can track user behaviors. Approximately half of all websites use cookies in some way.
- o Cookies remember you and prevent you from having to sign in on every page you visit.
- o Cookies can optimize how information is delivered to you by knowing the type of computer or device you are using, operating system, browser you are on, etc.
- o They can track what you look or search for when visiting an online store (such as Amazon or Etsy) and serve up suggestions for similar items on other sites or in advertisements (on Gmail or Facebook).

Project: (Slide 8) and play video.

Ask:

- “What are some examples of online “cookies” that you’ve experienced?” “For example: Have you ever browsed or shopped for something online (like on Amazon, NewEgg, or Best Buy), then noticed how ads for the same item appear in the sidebar of your social media or email sites?”
- “How can cookies be helpful?” “For example: have you ever forgotten your username or password, but your device or browser remembers it for you?”
- “How have you stayed in control in the past?” “How will you change your approach now that you know more?”

7. **A control plan-** Distribute the [What do I want my digital footprint to be?](#) handout. Have students work in pairs to fill out what they've learned about how information is shared online. **Ask:** "Are there aspects of online sharing that they'd like to learn more about?" Provide them with access to computers (or tablets) and the Internet to do additional research if needed.

Generate a discussion on other components of privacy and discuss the science of how information is collected online.

Share in control tips:

- After students have compiled information on their handout, have each team choose one "tip" list to share with others, and have them share with others. They can explain how their top can help create a positive digital footprint.

8. **Project (Slide 9) Create** posters or fliers to post around the school or share on the class blog or website. Or have them try one of the free online tools listed below to transform their list into a visual infographic. These tools are easy and fun for students to use and will help them think about how to communicate their information in an engaging and impactful way!

- <https://infogram.com/>
- <https://piktochart.com/>

Wrap-Up: Reflection

1. **Ask** students to reflect on what they have learned. (**Slide 10**)

Ask:

"How can you be in control of what you share online"?

"What do you want your digital footprint to say about you"?

"Why is a favorable digital reputation important for you"?

Invite volunteers to share and discuss their thoughts with the rest of the class.

Sharing Online

Did you know that much of what you share online is permanent?

You leave digital footprints online, and this is just like a fingerprint, your digital and online interactions are a unique reflection of you. Your behaviors online leave a trail of information that can be tracked, saved, or shared, even when we think we have deleted them

Have you ever wondered who is able to see what you have posted online?

Do you ever wonder how many people can view what you've posted online?

What about how long your post will last?

So to get an idea of how many people may actually see a post you will be calculating your digital footprint. Think about the latest thing you shared with a friend, via email or text, or posted on a website or social media platform. For example: a story, a photo, a link, or a comment.

Latest piece of information I shared _____ (1 item)

- Multiply "1" by the number of friends you have online or as email/text contacts. _____
- Multiply that number by 300, or the number of friends you have online _____
- Multiply that number by 500, or the number of "friends of friends" your friends have. _____
- What number are you up to? _____, it gets big quickly, doesn't it?
- Now imagine multiplying that number by the number of people who live in your town, city, or state. _____ (and remember they have "friends of friends" too!)

This is just the beginning of the number of people who could potentially see (or forward/share) what you've posted online. For example: It's how one funny video clip suddenly has millions of views on YouTube.

Imagine you tell your friend something personal. Would you want 150,000 people to know about it?

_____.



WHAT DO I WANT MY DIGITAL FOOTPRINT TO BE?

Name _____

Think about the mark you want to leave behind in the world. What would you want a search of your name to reveal? Your digital footprint is your online reputation, but it impacts your offline world too. Friends, family, college admissions officers, law enforcement, future employers, and anyone who is interested in finding out about you can and will search for you online. So, be thoughtful about what you want to put out there—because once it's online, it could be there forever!

Use this graphic organizer to track what you learned about how you can stay in control of your privacy and how you can create a positive digital footprint! When complete, choose 1 list to transform into an infographic and visually communicate and share what you learned with others.

1. Information I want/should keep private:

2. Information I want to share:

3. Online safety tips:

4. Power password tips:

5. My Personal Digital Guidelines:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.
