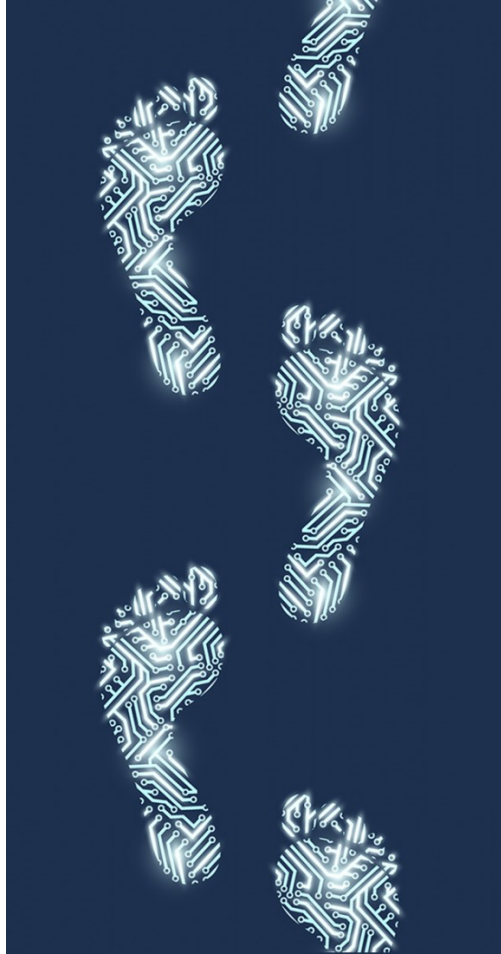By Yvonne Wu

My Digital Footprint
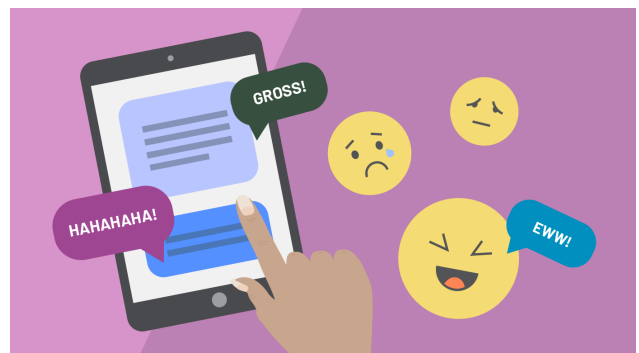

(Source: [click here](#))

What Did You Find After Googling Yourself?

After googling my full name, nothing that relates to me in any way shows up. Photos of adults who I've never seen before appear. There are hundreds of random social media profiles with my name, none of which are mine. The only significant thing I found was the biography and description on a hospital website of an adept neurologist in California with the same name as me. From this search, I realized that I don't have an obvious digital footprint when my name is googled carelessly. However, I can imagine that if someone really wanted to find me online, they would be able to. I know that what they find wouldn't affect me negatively, since I'm careful with what I put online. My footprint would probably come across normally to others.

How Might Your Digital Footprint Affect You and Why is it Important to be Aware of Your Footprint?

Someone's digital footprint can affect them in many ways, whether it's negatively or positively. If someone searches a person up online and something negative comes up (cyber bullying, inappropriate content, etc),

(Source: [click here](#))

then it might leave a bad impression on them. Post secondary administrators might google a student's name to see what kind of

digital footprint they have. If they dislike something that comes up, they most likely won't consider accepting that student into the school. This would negatively affect the student, because now they have one less opportunity for their future. On the other hand, if positive things (such as friendly social media posts, photos of them doing

(Source: click here)

good things, kind messages to other users, etc) appear when the student's name is googled, it would imprint a favourable impression on the administrator. This would lead to higher chances of being accepted into the post secondary program. The same goes for job prospects, but it's about being hired or not. It's important to be aware of your own digital footprint because everything you do online stays online forever. What appears when people search your name can heavily affect your future (job opportunities, social life, educational opportunities), or even put you in danger. If you share too much personal information online (your school, full name, location, etc), then it becomes easy for people to track you, which can get dangerous. Keeping your digital footprint under your own control and making sure to only share safe information online can save you from damaging your reputation, safety, and future.

Three Strategies to Keep Your Footprint Safe and Appropriate

One strategy to keep your digital footprint safe, is to never share personal information online about yourself or others. When you share information like your school, full name, and phone number, strangers can track you down easily. Following this strategy can help you stay hidden from people with bad intentions.

(Source: click here)

Another strategy to keep your digital footprint appropriate is to check with yourself before you post something on social media. Does it hurt you or anyone else? Does it offend or discriminate anyone? Does it put anyone in danger? If the answer to any of these is yes, you shouldn't post it on social media. This is valuable because it keeps you from doing anything that can harm yourself or another person. Everything you put online stays online forever. The last strategy you can use is to create strong passwords for all your accounts. You can do this by making a different password for each of your online accounts, and keeping track of them physically instead of digitally. Use

(Source:)

numbers, letters, characters, and all kinds of things to create unique passwords that cannot be guessed. This can stop hackers from hacking into your accounts and accessing all of your important and personal information, which is very dangerous.

Digital Permanence

Digital Permanence is how everything that is put on the internet, stays on the internet. If you post something on social media but decide to take it down later, it actually doesn't disappear. It's just hard to find on the surface of the internet, which is the level of the internet that the majority of people are on.

(Source:)

We should all care about digital permanence because if we know that everything we put on the internet is there forever, we can be more careful about it. That way, we know to only leave positive footprints on the internet, so it doesn't negatively affect us later.

Conclusion

Overall, understanding your digital footprint and how to keep it safe and appropriate is very important. Knowing the different ways it can affect your life will help you be careful with how you use the internet. Be safe and appropriate on the web!