



Digital footprint

Your digital footprint is the trail of data you leave behind each time you use the Internet. It is a body of information created by your online actions and communications. Your digital footprint can shape your online reputation, making it either positive or negative.

Passive

Passive digital footprints are created by data you leave online without realising, such as your IP address, location, search history and social media activities.

Active

Active digital footprints are created when you deliberately submit information online, such as by filling out forms with personal details or posting on social media.

Posts on social media

Your social media posts have a significant influence on how others perceive you. People who do not know you personally will form judgments based on your online content. This is particularly true for potential employers, who often check social media to gain a fuller understanding of job applicants. Inappropriate posts, images or evidence of negative behaviour, such as bullying, can prevent you from securing an interview or a job. Your posts contribute to your 'online story'.

Online identity

Your online identity is the way you present yourself across online communities and websites. This includes the name you use, whether real or a pseudonym. Be cautious about your online presence, as once information is posted it is very difficult to remove and can remain online indefinitely.

Identity theft

Identity theft occurs when a cybercriminal steals personal details to impersonate someone for their own gain. This can happen through hacking, data breaches or phishing scams. Cybercriminals target names, contact details, national insurance numbers, bank details and passwords to create false identities, usually for financial fraud.

The risks of inappropriate images

Images and videos leave lasting impressions. Inappropriate content, such as pornography or graphic material, including violence or injuries, can lead to negative feelings or distorted perceptions. Such content can be encountered intentionally or unintentionally, for example via adverts or social media. Always consider the appropriateness of images you post online: would you be comfortable with family or future employers seeing them years from now?