

Pascack Valley Regional High School District
Digital Citizenship
Digital Footprint & Reputation

What is Digital Footprint?

Your Digital Footprint comprises of the records and traces one leaves behind as they use electronic devices. One's Digital Footprint is the foundation of their Digital Reputation.

People leave explicit and implicit Digital Footprints. Explicit examples include, but are not limited to, posting on social media, e-mail messages, video conferencing, and text messages. Implicit examples include saved passwords, browsing cookies, information stored in the cloud, and online transactions.

Why is Digital Footprint important?

Your Digital Footprint likely tells a great deal about your interests, hobbies, relationships, finances, and more. It is important to understand that information collected from your Digital Footprint never truly goes away - even if you erase it from your computer.

Most understand why explicit footprints never go away - screenshots can be taken of postings, messages can be forwarded to unintended recipients, free e-mail services harvest your contact information - but the implicit ones catch many by surprise. Data mining of your implicit Digital Footprint is beyond your control, allowing this information to be collected, mined and profiled by many organizations - regardless of whether or not you have given explicit permission for use of this information.

What is the relevance for Students?

Our students are now forging relationships and connections that will carry them well beyond their teenage years. Their Digital Footprint and Reputation will mean more for this and future generations than ever before; therefore, it is crucial that they understand how they are establishing their Digital Footprint and how that Reputation will affect them in the short and long term.

What can we do to help students?

Here is a short list of examples educators may use to discuss the relevance of Digital Footprint and Reputation

- Read and discuss an article with students regarding how Digital Footprint (explicit and/or implicit) affected a young person's life (prevented them from getting into a college, lost a scholarship, denied a job, etc...)
- Show examples of appropriate/inappropriate uses of Social Media
- Use Social Media in class, demonstrating appropriate behavior
- Discuss how an event in history may have been handled differently if Digital Footprint existed at the time
- Discuss the business implications, good and bad, of data mining a person's digital footprint
- Have students calculate how much information their Digital Footprint has comprised of in the last 24 hours (sizes of pictures, number of postings, number of websites visit times "1 KB" for each cookie stored, etc...) Students may be surprised at how much information they are leaving out there!

Where can I learn more?

- <https://www.commonsensemedia.org/educators/scope-and-sequence#grades-9-12>
- <http://www.internetsociety.org/your-digital-footprint>