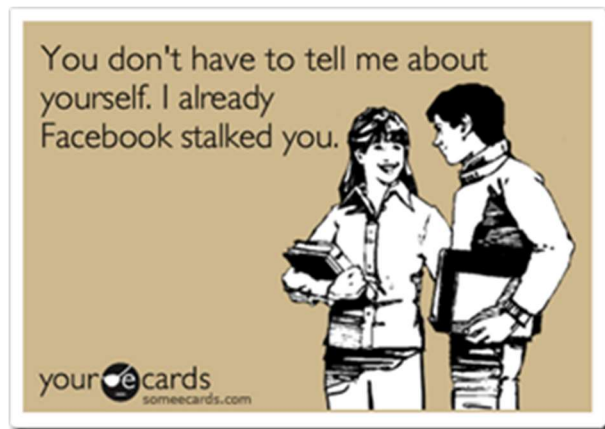


## Internet Safety and why YOU Should Care



Have you been warned about the dangers of “oversharing” and wondered, “what is that?” Have you heard how your digital footprint can get so big that strangers can access some of your personal photos? Do you even know what a digital footprint is?

Let’s start simple, dictionary.com has two different definitions for “digital footprint.” The first is, “one’s unique set of digital activities, actions, and communications that leave a data trace on the internet or on a computer or other digital device and can identify the particular user or device.” Basically, your digital footprint is like a trail of breadcrumbs, or footprints that you make when you go onto the internet. Things that are part of your digital footprint are; your browsing history, your cookies (basically an ID tag for your computer to the website’s network, go to <https://www.kaspersky.com/resource-center/definitions/cookies> for more info), your subscriptions, newsletters, communications and social media posts. Your digital footprint might be big or small, and one of the easiest ways to see is to search your name and see what comes up. If nothing for you comes up that means that you probably have a pretty small digital footprint. If lots of stuff comes up, you have a bigger footprint. There are pros and cons of having a big and small digital footprint. The pros of having a big footprint, are, mostly social pros. You can meet more people; you might find people who have similar interests as you. But having a large digital footprint makes you vulnerable to, cyberstalkers (stalkers, but online), identity thieves, and interestingly enough, employers and universities. Which brings us to our next point, oversharing.

Oversharing is basically when you share information that is too personal (like your house address) or are as one kid put it “posting to be posting, and not because they were having that great of a time.” When you’re posting that much, you might forget to be careful about what you post, and might accidentally post something that you’ll regret later on. An example of this is when another kid noted that what she described as “things meant to be texted one-to-one” were being shared on social media to around 50 people. When you’re oversharing, you’re posting all this information about yourself, this is when you do the most damage to yourself. Companies and post-secondary schools could look at your posts and 1. Misinterpret them in a bad way or 2. Might find something that you might not want them to know, and your chances at getting a job there or getting into the school might go poof.

Let's go over some examples of bad choices on the internet. Posting personal information: personal phone number, license plate, pictures of legal documents like a passport or birth certificate or travel plans (who knows who's going to break into your house). You should also be careful about how much you post because it can lead to you posting personal information. You should also avoid complaining and gossiping about people or things on social media. This can spike big arguments, make a whole lot of people (maybe even people you know in real life) upset with you, and seem like a dislikable person overall (is dislikable a word?). This last one seems obvious, but you shouldn't post stuff that will make you look like a criminal. Don't post about how you stole wine from your parents' bedroom last night then take it down and say you were joking 5 minutes later. That's idiotic.

:)

You're promoting bad behaviour and people might not see that you said you were joking then go tell your parents or the police. Now let's go over some steps you can take so stay safe and avoid this problem.

First, look up yourself on the internet, put it in google, then put it into the social media platforms you use. See what you find. Did you find some posts from 3 years ago? Or maybe something you thought was private? Now what you want to do is delete all the old posts and accounts that you don't need or use anymore. This way even if someone screenshotted it, they won't be able to find it on your page anymore. Next is to make sure that the stuff you want to be private is private, then go back and search yourself again, see what you find, if you keep finding things that I said that shouldn't be on there go back and take it down. Another VERY important thing is to THINK:

T – is it true?

H – is it helpful

I – is it illegal/important/inspiring

K – is it kind

If you follow these things you should be posting pretty safe stuff.

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