

Your Digital Identity

Textbook

Your Digital Identity



More Than Just a Username

Every time you go online—whether you're posting a picture, commenting on a video, or filling out a profile—you are creating your **digital identity**. This identity is made up of everything you do on the internet and includes things like your usernames, profile pictures, what you share, and how you behave online. Think of it as a digital version of yourself that others can see.

Your digital identity is part of your **digital footprint**, which includes all the data you leave behind when you use the internet. This can come from websites you visit, apps you use, posts you write, and even from other people tagging you. Some of this information is public, and some is private—but much of it can last a long time or even permanently. That means the things you do online today could still be around years from now!

The Digital Footprint Trail

Let's imagine your digital footprint as footprints in wet cement—not sand. Once those footprints harden, it's hard to erase them. Information like your photos, usernames, school name, and location can often be stored or shared without your control. Even deleted posts might still be saved or shared by someone else.

This is why it's important to think before you click. Protect your **personally identifiable information (PII)**, like your full name, address, phone number, or school details. Keeping your digital footprint safe and positive helps protect your privacy and builds a strong, respectful online identity.

The Reality of Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is when someone uses digital tools—like social media, text messages, or websites—to harm or intimidate others. This might include mean comments, spreading rumors online, sharing embarrassing pictures, or pretending to be someone else.

Cyberbullying can hurt just as much as bullying in person. It can cause stress, sadness, or anxiety for the person being bullied. In schools and communities, cyberbullying can lead to consequences such as being suspended or losing privileges to use technology. Some actions might even break the law, depending on how serious they are.

It's never okay to bully others, online or offline. If you see cyberbullying, report it to a trusted adult, a teacher, or the app's help center. Standing up for others makes the internet a safer place for everyone.

When Digital Behavior Affects Real Life

When people are online, they sometimes act differently than they would face-to-face. This is known as **online disinhibition**—a fancy way of saying people might say or do things online that they wouldn't do in person. It can happen because they feel anonymous or disconnected from others' feelings.

But even though you're online, your actions still affect real people. Hurtful or inappropriate posts can damage reputations and relationships—and once something is shared, it's hard to take back. Using technology responsibly means treating others with kindness, even behind a screen.

Online Privacy and the "Right to Be Forgotten"

Once something is posted online, it can be nearly impossible to fully delete. Even if you remove a photo or comment, someone might have already taken a screenshot or shared it. This is why many people around the world are talking about the **"Right to be Forgotten."** This idea means people should be allowed to ask websites or search engines to delete certain personal information—especially if it's no longer relevant or could be harmful.

While not all countries follow this rule, it's still important to understand that your data online can last a long time. Always be thoughtful about what you post and who can see it.

Why Digital Media Habits Matter

Spending a lot of time on digital devices can affect both your **mental** and **physical health**. Constant notifications and messages might cause stress or make it hard to concentrate. Seeing only people's "perfect" lives online can lead to negative thoughts about yourself. That's why it's important to regulate your digital media use.

Try to set limits on screen time, take breaks, and balance online time with other activities like being outdoors, playing sports, or spending time with friends and family. Healthy habits help keep your mind and body feeling good—and help you build a positive digital identity that you can be proud of.

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why do you think people behave differently online than they do in person?
 2. What are some ways you can build a positive digital footprint today?
 3. How can you help your friends make good choices about what they post online?
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Questions (5)

1. What is a digital footprint?

MULTIPLE CHOICE

Choose the correct answer:

- A. A type of password that protects your identity online
- B. A collection of websites you are allowed to visit
- C. The trail of data you leave behind when you use the internet
- D. The number of followers you have on social media

2. Which of the following is a possible consequence of cyberbullying?

MULTIPLE CHOICE

Choose the correct answer:

- A. Winning an online popularity contest
- B. Receiving more likes on social media
- C. Facing school disciplinary actions or legal consequences
- D. Getting banned from watching TV at home

3. What does "online disinhibition" mean?

MULTIPLE CHOICE

Choose the correct answer:

- A. Losing internet access due to a bad connection
- B. Posting carefully edited content
- C. Acting more kindly online than in person
- D. Saying or doing things online that you wouldn't do in person

4. What is one reason why personal data stays on the internet permanently?

MULTIPLE CHOICE

Choose the correct answer:

- A. Websites are legally required to delete your data after a week
- B. Once shared, data can be copied, saved, and spread by others
- C. Data is always saved in paper format and mailed to companies
- D. The government erases all digital history every year

5. Why is it important to protect your digital identity?

Choose the correct answer:

- A. To reduce the risk of identity theft or misuse of personal info
- B. To stop people from knowing your favorite hobbies
- C. So you can make more friends
- D. Because it helps your phone charge faster

Answer Keys & Solutions

Questions

1. What is a digital footprint?

MULTIPLE CHOICE

Correct Answer:

- A. A type of password that protects your identity online ✗ Incorrect
- B. A collection of websites you are allowed to visit ✗ Incorrect
- C. The trail of data you leave behind when you use the internet ✓ Correct
- D. The number of followers you have on social media ✗ Incorrect

2. Which of the following is a possible consequence of cyberbullying?

MULTIPLE CHOICE

Correct Answer:

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- B. Receiving more likes on social media ✗ Incorrect
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- D. Getting banned from watching TV at home ✗ Incorrect

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