

NEW MEXICO 4-H

Aggie Next Step

Digital Footprints



Post Secondary Pathways



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Digital Footprints

LESSON FOCUS

A digital footprint is the trail of data created through online and offline actions. Every post, search, and share adds to it and shapes how others see you. In this lesson, participants will explore how digital footprints are formed, their potential impact, and ways to manage them responsibly.

PREPARATION

Review lesson materials and determine which worksheets and handouts you will use for the lesson. Print enough pre/post assessments, worksheets, and handouts for each participant.

ACTIVITIES

1. Have participants complete the *Pre-Assessment*.

2. Optional Warm-Up Activity

(requires devices and internet access) Participants search for a public figure, a fictional character, or themselves online and explore what information is easily accessible.

Q: What types of information appeared first?

Q: Were you surprised by how much information was available?

Q: What impression would this information create?

Alternative: If devices are unavailable or privacy is a concern, use these discussion questions:

Q: Have you ever looked yourself up online?

Q: Were you surprised by what you found?

Q: How much do you think someone could find out about you from your digital footprint?

Q: Can your digital footprint help you as well as hurt you? Explain

3. Briefly explain that a digital footprint is the trail of information people leave behind through online activity (posts, comments, photos, searches, app usage, interaction with websites and AI tools).

Supplies

- Worksheets
- Handouts
- Pens/Pencils

OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- **Define** the term “digital footprint” and **explain** how online and offline actions contribute to it.
- **Identify** common activities and behaviors that create, expand, or influence a digital footprint.
- **Evaluate** how online behaviors can positively or negatively impact a person’s reputation and future opportunities.
- **Describe** the potential risks and long-term consequences of unmanaged digital footprints.
- **Apply** strategies to build a positive digital presence and manage personal privacy and online safety.



Digital Footprints

4. Distribute the **Fictional Profile Analysis** activity. Have participants work in small groups to analyze the profile and discuss.
5. Conduct the **Digital Footprints Sorting Activity**. Provide examples of online behaviors. Participants sort them into the correct categories. Discuss how digital footprints can create opportunities as well as consequences.
6. Facilitate a whole-group discussion on:
 - *How online actions shape reputation*
 - *The difference between public and private information*
 - *How others contribute to our digital footprint through tags, photos, and comments*
 - *How digital footprints can impact education, employment, and relationships*
 - *Ways to build a positive online presence*
7. If time allows, continue with an extension activity found on the following page. These include additional technology-based applications of digital footprint concepts. They are designed to deepen understanding and provide more real-world, hands-on connections to online behavior, privacy, and digital reputation. These activities may be used as whole-class extensions, small group work, or independent enrichment depending on available time and student readiness.
8. Distribute and review **12 Tips for Managing Your Digital Footprint**. Ask participants to identify two strategies they already practice and one new strategy they plan to adopt.
9. **Exit Ticket** – depending on time, this can be done as a class discussion, or students can complete the worksheet in class, as homework, or in the following class.
- 10. Have participants complete the Post-Assessment.**

Instructor Tips

- Maintain sensitivity when discussing personal examples—participants should never feel pressured to share personal accounts or information.
- Emphasize that digital footprints are not only about avoiding mistakes, but also about building a positive online presence.
- Keep examples current and age-appropriate by incorporating recent examples related to social media, AI tools, privacy, or online reputation when appropriate.

REFLECTION

Your digital footprint shapes how others see you, often before meeting you. By making smart choices, adjusting privacy settings, and thinking before you post, you can protect your reputation and control your online identity for a safer, more positive future.



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EXTENSIONS

- Distribute **The Amazing Mind Reader Activity** handout. This video shows a “mind reader” revealing private details about people using only publicly available online information.
Content Advisory: *Among the details revealed are that someone spends a lot on alcohol and that someone has multiple love interests (the tone implies sex partners).*
 - Have participants complete questions 1 and 2 before watching the video.
 - Play the video, but stop before the reveal of his secret. Participants will make a prediction on their worksheet.
 - Finish the video. Allow participants time to finish the worksheet and participate in a discussion.
- Distribute and review **Managing Your Footprint: Privacy Settings Checklist**.
 - Participants may review privacy settings, app permissions, unused accounts, and location-sharing settings on personal devices if appropriate.

DIFFERENTIATION

Content Support: Break larger tasks into smaller steps with check-in points.

Provide clearly labeled sorting categories and examples before beginning the sorting activity.

Reduce the number of sorting cards if needed.

Highlight important information in the fictional profile.

English Language Learners: Pair students with a supportive peer for discussions and collaborative activities.

Pre-teach key vocabulary: digital footprint, privacy, reputation, personal information, data collection, online presence, etc.

Provide sentence starters:

- “One risk I noticed was...”
- “This could affect someone because...”

Advanced or Early Finishers: Challenge participants to research current events involving digital footprints, privacy, or AI data collection.



Digital Footprints

RESOURCES

Optional Videos:

Note: Please preview all videos before showing them to students to ensure they are age-appropriate, relevant, and aligned with your classroom needs.

The Amazing Mind Reader

Amazing mind reader reveals his "gift"

<https://youtu.be/F7pYHN9iC9I?si=5EtwpsddT6gkDSJq>

Digital Footprints

Internet Safety Tips for Teens (6:26)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cnc4LaevRBw&t=1s>

Private and Personal Information (1:36)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MjPpG2e71Ec&t=79s>

Live My Digital for students: Digital Footprint (4:52)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OBg2YYV3Bts>

Managing Your Digital Footprint (15:21)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hpWlbfOduoU>

Digital Footprint - Behind the News (4:22)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h-S3ibdFIYI>

Additional Video Resources

[*TROPE video series*](#), explores the many factors and activities that add to each person's information footprint, and describes some of the strategies for limiting our exposure.

You're Leaving Footprints (4:12) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KAeJuod0GFA&t=184s>

Sharing Releases Control (6:10) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gpxrJSFkwlc&t=31s>

Identity Isn't Guaranteed (7:32) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oZ2_MKCQDgQ&t=32s

Search Is Improving (4:36) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aqPe4Pe5iJ8&t=30s>

There's No Anonymity (8:41) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=24Ne9MZebq0&t=350s>



NM PED Standards: Career and Technical Education (CTE):

CTE 2.2.2: Identify the main ideas of an informational text

CTE 8.1.1: Apply ethical reasoning in order to make ethical decisions

CTE 10.1.1: Employ information management techniques and strategies to assist in decision making

Common Career Technical Core (CCTC) Standards: Career Ready Practices (CRP):

CRP-7: Employ valid and reliable research strategies

CRP-9: Model integrity, ethical leadership, and effective management

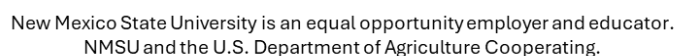
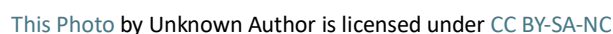
CRP-11: Use technology to enhance productivity

Optional ELA Alignment (Grades 6-12)

SL1: Participate in a range of conversations

SL2: Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats

RI1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly



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