

Digital Footprint

(HV July 2020)

Your digital footprint is everything on the Internet that's about you. This could include your profile on Facebook or Google+, photos that you or your friends & family have posted online, as well as anything you have ever written on discussion boards, blogs or anywhere else.

- Are you aware of your own digital footprint?
- Is there anything online that you wouldn't want a prospective employer to see?

Other people, including potential employers, will be aware of your digital footprint even if you aren't!

Research opinions on security and confidentiality of digital footprints.
(<http://www.pewinternet.org/search/digital+footprint/> 2014)

STEP 1: UNCOVER YOUR DIGITAL FOOTPRINT

You should first check what others can see about yourself – use Google or other search engines and search for yourself.

Make sure you continue to research yourself regularly so that you know what others will find. You might not have added anything new but your friends or family might have!

You can use services such as [Google Alerts](#) to receive automatic regular updates.

STEP 2: TAKE ADVANTAGE OF YOUR DIGITAL FOOTPRINT

You can use the Internet to create an up-to-date positive online presence that showcases your skills, experience & interests.

1. Create a profile that includes your CV on a professional social networking site such as [LinkedIn](#). Make sure you keep this profile & your CV up-to-date.
2. You can further enhance your digital footprint by commenting on blogs, news articles & discussions, adding book reviews on sites such as Amazon, or even writing your own blog.

Creating an up-to-date positive online presence will also help 'hide' any earlier less desirable content about you. Most internet searchers don't look beyond the top few results.

When researching employers don't forget to look at the professional social networking sites to check out the employer's digital footprint!

STEP 3: BEWARE OF YOUR DIGITAL FOOTPRINT

If you use social networking sites such as Facebook or regularly post photos, videos, blog comments etc online, it is important that you manage this carefully as a lot of information stored online will be public by default.

1. Clearly separate your personal and professional online profiles.
2. Change the privacy settings on your social networking sites so that only your friends can see your information.
3. If you want to keep a public profile don't include anything that you might find embarrassing later or wouldn't want your work colleagues, lecturers or an employer to see. If in doubt keep it private.
4. Consider using a different name (e.g a nickname) for your more private social profile.

Once information has been posted online it can become almost impossible to remove because of archiving and file sharing. Even if you deactivate your social networking account, the information may still be held in the system and be accessible to others.

EMAIL AND VOICEMAIL

You should also take care with other aspects of your personal profile. Don't use inappropriate personal email addresses (e.g. allaboutme@yahoo.com) and make sure your mobile phone voicemail sounds professional. First impressions count and you may not get a second chance.