



Essential Question: How can information you post on the Internet affect your future opportunities?

Learning Overview and Objectives

Overview: Students learn that everything they or anyone else posts about them online becomes part of a public online presence known as a digital footprint. Using the **Admissions Packet Student Handout**, they view elements of two students' digital footprints and consider how the footprints might affect those students' admission to college. Students then discuss what kinds of information they would want included in their own digital footprints, and learn strategies for shaping a positive online presence.

objectives

Students will:

- Learn that they have a public presence online called a digital footprint
- Recognize that any information they post online can help or hurt their image and future opportunities, including their chances for college admission or employment
- Consider how to present an authentic and positive image of themselves online

Materials and Preparation

Estimated time: 45 minutes

Materials

- **Video – Abbas's Video**
- **Admissions Packet Student Handout**
- **Admissions Packet Student Handout – Teacher Version**

Preparation

- Download the video, **Abbas's Video**, preview the video, and be prepared to play the video for the class
- Prepare a list of search results for a celebrity or other well-known person in a form that all students can see, perhaps on an interactive white board or overhead projector
- Copy the **Admissions Packet Student Handout**, one for every two to three students

Parent Resources

- Send home the **Privacy and Digital Footprints Parent Tip Sheet**
- Send home the **Privacy Parent/Teacher Intro Video**

Differentiated Instruction

For students who think they will not apply to college, have them analyze Markus and Tommy's online profiles to choose who is the best one for a job in a local business that hires teens.

Key Vocabulary

- **Digital footprint:** All of the information about a person that can be found online
- **Admission:** To let in or to be given entrance
- **Candidate:** Someone seeking entrance to a school or placement in a job, usually competing with others for the position



teaching plans

Introduce

SHOW students the list of search results for a celebrity or a well-known person. Project results for all students to see. Discuss the fact that the search results reflect everything that can be found on the Internet about that person. It includes everything they have posted about themselves (websites, blogs, Facebook pages, etc.) as well as everything others have posted about them.

INVITE students to consider what their own lives might be like five years from now by creating two results from an imaginary online search. Results should contain a title, a date, and a short description of what is in the result. Project the following results as models for students:

Jonathan P. Garcia exhibit at The Art Institute of Chicago

March 4, 2016 ... A fresh new exhibit from photographer Jonathan Garcia. Garcia's work will move you, enlighten you, and educate you about the history of Chicago neighborhoods.

Jonathan P. Garcia – Web design workshop

April 15, 2016 ... Enroll in tech guru Jonathan Garcia's Web design and programming workshop for teens ages 14 to 18. Enrollees will design a virtual reality webpage.

Jonathan P. Garcia's Blog

July 30, 2016 ... I've got only two more months to go in my Peace Corps service, and it looks like we're going to finish the water-filtration project before I go home. Check out my latest pics.

When students are finished writing, they should trade and compare their search results with someone else's. Invite volunteers to share their results.

ASK *Based on what people wrote about, what types of headlines do people want associated with themselves?*

Sample responses:

- *News about achievements or talent areas (e.g., music, sports, computers)*
- *Praise about their work*
- *Personal milestones they want to share with everyone*
- *Activities that make the world a better place*

ASK *What types of headlines might reflect poorly on someone?*

Sample responses:

- *A record of someone breaking the law*
- *Rude or nasty comments about others in a public online forum*
- *Photos of the person drinking and partying*

ASK *Do you think you should judge someone solely based on what you find about them online? Why or why not? (Students should recognize that someone's online presence might include things that were intended to be private, or inaccurate information posted by someone else. It could even include information about another person with the same name. Therefore, it may not give a complete or balanced picture of the person.)*



SHARE with students that they will be exploring how information they post today could affect themselves and others in the future – for better and for worse. Point out that this online material may affect them as they apply to college or think about future jobs and opportunities. Encourage students to consider that they have the ability to shape their online profile so that it presents an image they can be proud of.

Teach 1: Review College Applications

TEACH the Key Vocabulary term **digital footprint**.

DISCUSS with students how the information in a digital footprint becomes public by being copied and passed on so that it can be searched and viewed by a large, invisible audience. Also discuss the fact that the information in a digital footprint is often permanently online, because it is archived in a variety of ways and passed on by others.

TEACH the Key Vocabulary terms **admission**, **applicant**, and **candidate**.

ARRANGE students in groups of two to three and distribute the **Admissions Packet Student Handout**, one for each group.

EXPLAIN to students they will be role-playing college admissions officers, the people who decide which candidates should be admitted to a college. Tell them that two high school seniors, Markus and Tommy, have applied for admission to college. Their applications include their grades, test scores, and a personal essay. The problem is that the college only has room for one of them. The admissions officers decide to gather information from each candidate's digital footprint to help make their decision.

(Note: Your students will likely have a variety of paths in their futures. You may wish to emphasize that many of the same factors that affect their college admissions would also apply to getting a job or getting into a training program.)

INSTRUCT students to work as a group to read and fill out their handouts.

Teach 2: Select a Candidate

INVITE a volunteer from each group to explain which applicant they chose to admit, and why. Refer to the **Admissions Packet Student Handout – Teacher Version** for guidance on leading the discussion.

ENCOURAGE students to further probe their choices by using these follow-up questions.

ASK *Why did you not choose the other candidate? Is there additional information about this candidate that could have made you want to choose him?*

Sample responses:

- *Markus did not get in because he did not seem that interesting. He also seemed a little unmotivated. (Maybe it would make a difference if Markus had a stronger online presence that showed he was interested in things other than sports.)*
- *We did not select Tommy because we thought he was fake or insincere. (Maybe it would make a difference if you knew that the exchange between Tommy and his friend Maggie was a private joke. Maybe Maggie is also trying to get in to the same college as Tommy, and writes joke messages to make him seem insincere.)*



College Bound

ASK *Do you think the comments by JJ and Maggie had a positive or negative effect on their friends' chances for college? Do you think this is what they intended when they wrote the comments?* (Students should recognize that these comments revealed private information about Markus and Tommy, and also emphasized negative rather than positive qualities. You might ask students to comment on JJ and Maggie's motivations.)

ASK *Do you think this is a good way for a real admissions officer to make a final choice? Why or why not?* (Students should understand that while admissions officers, prospective employers, and the like sometimes do look at online profiles, this may not be the best or fairest way to assess someone. The material that appears online may not present a full or accurate picture of a person and of his or her personality and achievements.)

ASK *Do you think teens share too much information about themselves or about others online? Why or why not?* (Students will have differing opinions, but they should recognize the importance of carefully considering what they contribute to their digital footprints, and to the digital footprints of others.)

Wrap Up and Assess

Use these questions to assess your students' understanding of the lesson objectives.

ASK *How would you describe the main reasons for your choice of Markus or Tommy? How do your reasons connect to what we learned about digital footprints?* (Students should be able to explain their choice and should recognize that their candidates' digital footprints provided the reasons for that choice.)

ASK *How is a digital footprint created? Why does the information in a digital footprint often become public, and why is it permanent?* (Students should know that a digital footprint is all the information online about a person either posted by that person or others. The information in it can become public because it can be searched, copied, and passed on so that it plays to a large invisible audience. It can be difficult or impossible to remove, and it therefore becomes a permanent part of their online image.)

ASK *What types of online information would help present the most positive image of you?* (Students should realize that their reputation may be enhanced by information on interests and activities, opinions, and material giving a consistent picture of oneself.)

ASK *What are some of the larger ethical implications of sharing information online about others?* (Guide students to reflect on how people can influence the digital footprints of others — for better or for worse — and how it is therefore the responsibility of a good digital citizen to be mindful of what they post about others.)



Extension Activity

Have students write a paragraph from a college counselor writing to the student about how the counselor views them after conducting a Web search on their name. The paragraph can discuss what information the counselor found about the student on the Web and how this information might reflect on that student as he or she begins to apply for college.



Homework

Have students analyze their own online presence. They can do this by searching on their own names and reviewing their profiles on the school website or social media sites. Revisit the lesson introduction, in which they imagined their future digital footprint, and ask them what they can do now to create a footprint they will be proud of. Encourage students to invite a parent or other family member to help them strategize about creating a positive online presence. Ask them to report back to the class on at least one change they made or decided to make.

 Create a webpage about your future using free online software, such as Wix (<http://www.wix.com>).

Alignment with Standards – National Educational Technology Standards for Students® 2007

(Source: International Society for Technology in Education, 2007)

1. Creativity and Innovation

- d. identify trends and forecast possibilities

2. Communication and Collaboration

- a. interact, collaborate, and publish with peers, experts, or others employing a variety of digital environments and media
- d. contribute to project teams to produce original works or solve problems

3. Research and Information Literacy

- b. locate, organize, analyze, evaluate, synthesize, and ethically use information from a variety of sources and media
- d. use multiple processes and diverse perspectives to explore alternative solutions

4. Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, and Decision Making

- a. identify and define authentic problems and significant questions for investigation
- b. plan and manage activities to develop a solution or complete a project
- c. collect and analyze data to identify solutions and/or make informed decisions

5. Digital Citizenship

- a. advocate and practice safe, legal, and responsible use of information and technology
- b. exhibit a positive attitude toward using technology that supports collaboration, learning, and productivity
- c. demonstrate personal responsibility for lifelong learning



Admissions Packet

Directions

You are college admissions officers who must decide which of two college applicants to admit. The admissions committee has already determined that the candidates, Markus and Tommy, are equally desirable based on their grades, test scores, and personal essays. The officers also have the following information from an online search of each candidate.

Review the material below. Then fill out the Feedback Form and make your final choice.

Online Documents about Markus Sanders

Document #: 1 of 2

Description: Post from Markus's blog, "Sports Spots: Reviews of neighborhood courts and fields."

Who can see it? Anyone

Sports Spots

Reviews of neighborhood courts and fields

WELCOME

- About
- FAQ
- Newsletter

RESOURCES

- More reviews

Thursday, November 11, 2009



Review of Betts Park

Teens love it, parents don't. Betts Park boasts four baseball diamonds, a soccer field, and four tennis courts. It's an after-school mecca for kids from Central and Highland High Schools for baseball, soccer, or goofing off. The fields are in amazingly good condition, with green grass cut close and well watered. But spectators beware. There is no room for people to sit. Park operators say the next step is to install bleachers and concessions trucks. For now, though, fans are forced to sit on their coats or...TO STAND.

Photos: Matt-rex public domain image:

[URL:http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Betts.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Betts.jpg)

[leave a comment >>](#)

Markus



Admissions Packet

Document #: 2 of 2

Description: Screenshot of Markus's MyBook profile taken yesterday

Who can see it? Markus's friends

MyBook
Settings Account Logout

Search

Applications

- Photos
- Notes
- Scrabulous
- Groups
- Events

Markus Sanders

Networks: Hiffland High

Age: 17

[Friend Request](#)

[Send Markus a Message](#)

[Play Scrabulous with Markus](#)

[Poke Markus](#)

status: get involved in your community today!

Information

Contact Info
Email: Markus_parks-rec@gmail.com

Personal Info
Interests: **blogging about parks and fields**
Favorite TV Shows: **Anything MBA, NBA, or NFL**
Favorite Books: **The Natural, Tales from First Base**

Friends
Markus has 77 friends [See All](#)

Kiki Myers

Bryce Stockman

Groups

Hiffland High Baseball Fans · bloggers united

The Wall

Bryce Stockman (Chicago, IL) wrote at 2:00 p.m. on November 11, 2008

Did ya catch that game last night? We goin' all the way baby!!! BOOM.

You know it. Champions of the WURLD!!!!!!

JJ Kane (Chicago, IL) wrote:
happy 4U, H—but U need to get a life and care more about your future.



Admissions Packet

Online Documents about Tommy Williams

Document #: 1 of 2

Description: Article from the *Hiffland High Gazette* when Tommy was a freshman

Who can see it? Anyone

Hiffland High Gazette

Freshman starts his own nonprofit to serve kids with learning differences

Monday, March 5, 2007 | <http://www.hifflandgazette.org>

CHICAGO – Freshman Tommy Williams is starting high school on the right foot. Just before entering Hiffland, Tommy founded a nonprofit organization in Chicago called Making Different Special. The nonprofit offers support groups and tutoring services to elementary and middle school kids with learning differences like dyslexia. According to Tommy’s mom, a physician at Chestnut Lake Hospital, Tommy has always been a leader. “When Tommy was little, he was selling lemonade with fruit chunks in it at the neighborhood art fair, when everyone else was selling plain old lemonade. He’s always had bright ideas.” Not a bad way to start out high school. There will no doubt be four promising years ahead for Williams.

– *Cris Cross, Hiffland High reporter*



Admissions Packet

Document #: 2 of 2

Description: Screenshot of Tommy's MyBook profile taken yesterday

Who can see it? Anyone

MyBook
Settings Account Logout

Search

Applications

- Photos
- Notes
- Scrabulous
- Groups
- Events

Tommy Williams

Networks: Hiffland High

Age: 17

[Friend Request](#)

[Send Tommy a Message](#)

[Play Scrabulous with Tommy](#)

[Poke Tommy](#)

status: mentor is a great way to give back!

Information

Contact Info
Email: Tommy_mds@gmail.com

Personal Info
Interests: mentoring

Friends
Tommy has 77 friends [See All](#)

Ronald Reed

Keenan Williams

Groups

Making Special Different

The Wall

Jonny Terwilliger (Michigan, MI) wrote at 3:42 p.m. on November 24, 2008

I had the best time at the Youth Center's Big Brother's Club last Tuesday! It was grrrrreat!

Become a fan of Making Special Different on MyBook

Maggie (Los Angeles, CA) wrote

Fans? I thought u gave that up last year



Admissions Packet

Name(s)

Class

Date

Feedback Form

Fill out the chart and answer the questions. Make your final choice, and be ready to make a case for your selection.

	What information about the student online makes him an appealing candidate?	What information about the student online makes you question whether he should be admitted?
Markus Sanders		
Tommy Williams		

Final Choice: _____

Main Reasons for Choice:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



Admissions Packet

Feedback Form

Fill out the chart and answer the questions. Make your final choice, and be ready to make a case for your selection.

	What information about the student online makes him an appealing candidate?	What information about the student online makes you question whether he should be admitted?
Markus Sanders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He seems to have a lot of passion about things that interest him. • He has his own blog, which is unusual for someone his age. • He seems good humored and honest. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He might be a little superficial, given that he talks about little else but sports. • He does not seem dedicated to helping others. A blog about baseball fields does not count for much. • He might not be very interesting or have very good social skills, judging by JJ's comment.
Tommy Williams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He started a nonprofit for kids with learning differences • He seems entrepreneurial • He seems interesting and fun 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He seems kind of insincere. Maggie's comment makes it sound like his nonprofit might not be what it seems. • His mother's comment about his lemonade stand makes it sound like his main goal is beating others. • He seems like he is into partying. His friends wrote about "drinks" in his profile, and these drinks might be alcoholic.

Final Choice: Most will likely select Markus, but the case can be made for either one.

Main Reasons for Choice:

If Markus:

1. He seems more honest than Tommy.
2. He seems passionate.
3. He seems like a self-starter.

If Tommy:

1. He started a nonprofit.
2. There is an article about his accomplishments.
3. He has a sense of humor and jokes around with his friends.



Lesson Assessment

Name

Class

Date

1. Your digital footprint is all of the information about you:

- a) that can be found online, posted by you or by others
- b) that can be found online, posted only by you
- c) in the text messages that you send
- d) in the emails that you send to your friends

2. Look at Anna’s social network profile below. Find three things on the profile that shouldn’t be there and mark them with an “x”.



3. True or False: Only things that you post about yourself affect your online image. Posts about you by other people don’t matter.

- a) True
- b) False



Lesson Assessment

1. Your digital footprint is all of the information about you:

- a) that can be found online, posted by you or by others
- b) that can be found online, posted only by you
- c) in the text messages that you send
- d) in the emails that you send to your friends

Answer feedback

The correct answer is **a**. Your digital footprint is all of the information about you that can be found online, posted by you or by others. Your digital footprint can help or hurt your image.

2. Look at Anna’s social network profile below. Find three things on the profile that shouldn’t be there and mark them with an “x”.





Lesson Assessment

Answer feedback

Anna posts several references to partying, which might create a negative image for college admissions officers, family, or people at work. Anna also makes a comment about a friend that makes both Anna and her friend look bad. Anna should remove all of these things to improve her online image.

3. True or False: Only things that you post about yourself affect your online image. Posts about you by other people don't matter.

a) True

b) False

Answer feedback

The correct answer is **b. False**. A person's entire digital footprint is part of their online image. This is why it's important to show positive things about yourself and others when you post online.



Common Sense on Privacy and Digital Footprints

Some Facts

- 80 percent of teens ages 15 to 18 feel their friends share too much information online (Common Sense Media, 2010)
- 65 percent of teens ages 15 to 18 think their personal information is private online (Common Sense Media, 2010)
- Nearly 80 percent of teens who are on social networks protect their profile by using some type of privacy setting (Computer Associates, 2009)

What's the Issue?

Our teens live in a culture of sharing that has forever changed the concept of privacy. In a world where everyone is connected and anything created online can be copied, pasted, and sent to thousands of people in a heartbeat, privacy starts to mean something different than simply guarding personal or private information. Each time your teen fills out a profile without privacy controls, comments on something, posts a video, or sends a picture of themselves to friends, they potentially broadcast themselves to the world.

Why It Matters

Digital life is both public and permanent. Everything our teens do online creates digital footprints that migrate and persist. Something that happens on the spur of the moment – a funny picture, an angry post – can resurface years later. And if teens aren't careful, their reputations can be harmed. Your teen may think he or she just sent something to a friend, but that friend can send it to a friend's friend, who can send it to their friends' friends, and so on. That's how secrets become headlines, and how false information spreads fast and furiously. The stakes only increase when we remember that all of this takes place in front of a huge, invisible audience. Teens' deepest secrets can be shared with thousands of people they've never even met.

common sense says

- **Help teens think long term.** Explain to teens that everything leaves a digital footprint with information that can be searched and passed along to thousands of people. Others can pass on that information too, so if they don't want to see something tomorrow, they'd better not post it today.
- **Teach teens to keep personal information private.** Help teens define which information is important for them to keep private when they're online. To start, we recommend that teens not share their addresses, phone numbers, or birth dates.
- **Make sure your teens use privacy settings on their social network pages.** Encourage teens to think carefully about the nature of their relationships (close friends, family, acquaintances, strangers) and adjust their privacy settings accordingly.



Common Sense on Privacy and Digital Footprints

- **Remind teens to protect their friends' privacy.** Passing along a rumor or identifying someone in a picture (called “tagging”) affects other people’s privacy. If your teen is uncomfortable being tagged in friends’ photos, they can ask to have the photos or the tags removed. But beyond that, there’s not too much they can do. So teach your teen that it’s better to check with friends first before posting something about them.
- **Remind teens that the Golden Rule applies online.** While teens don’t always have control over what other people post of them, they can be proactive and help guide which snapshots of their lives are taken in the first place. What goes around comes around. If teens spread a rumor or talk badly about a teacher, they can’t assume that what they post will stay private. Whatever negative things they say can and probably will come back to haunt them, in more ways than they can imagine.

Families Can Talk About It

- *Do you really want everyone to know that about you?*
- *Think about what parents of your friends might think of you if they saw that.*
- *How do you think that person would feel if he/she later saw it someday?*