



Shaping the Conversation for Safer Communities

Crime Prevention Week - November 1st to 7th, 2015

Crime Prevention is Everyone's Responsibility

Digital Citizenship

Responsible use of technology

The concept of digital citizenship is gaining momentum around the world. Whether it is called digital citizenship, digital wellness or digital ethics the issues are the same; how should we act when we are online, and what should be taught to the next generation.

What is Digital Citizenship?

Digital citizenship can be defined as the norms and behavior with regard to technology use. Some of the key elements that make-up digital citizenship include¹:

1. Digital Etiquette: standards of conduct for behaving and interacting with other digital users.
2. Digital Health and Wellness: the physical and psychological well-being in a technologically connected world.
3. Digital Security: precautions to create a sense of safety online.
4. Digital Identity: As one communicates, creates and collaborates in online forums, you progressively building a digital identity. This identity can remain public for many years – whether positive or negative and whether posted. The types of self-expression, self-reflection and feedback conducted online all influence the identity you portray, in both the online and offline worlds.

Engaging in a Digital World

Digital citizenship can further be highlighted through the concepts of Respect, Educate and Protect.

Respect - for yourself and of others, applying the same standards of behaviour we follow in the offline world.

Educate - being able to judge and make informed decisions about the information available online

Protect - yourself and the safety and privacy of others.

What is your Digital Footprint?

Every day, whether we want to or not, most of us contribute to a growing portrait of who we are online. This portrait helps companies target content at specific markets and consumers, helps employers look into your background, and helps advertisers track your movements across multiple websites. Whatever you do online, you might be leaving digital footprints behind.

No matter what you do online it is important that you know what kind of trail you're leaving, and what the possible effects can be. The following are examples of how your digital footprint is left after you.

Websites and Online Shopping

Retailers and product review sites often leave cookies on your system which can track your movement from site-to-site. This allows targeted advertisements that can show you products you have recently looked at online.

Social Media

Likes, Retweets, and Facebook comments (even private ones) leave a record. Learn about the default privacy settings for your social media accounts, and keep an eye on them.

Mobile Phones, Tablets, or Laptops.

Some websites will build a list of different devices you have used to visit those sites. While this can often be used as a way to help secure your account, it is important to understand the information being collected about your habits.

¹ Excerpted from www.digitalcitizenship.net



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Cleaning-up your Digital Footprint

Now is the perfect time to clean-up your digital footprint. Here's a checklist with some tips to get you started

SEARCH YOURSELF ONLINE

Do a quick Web search of your first and last name. Don't forget to try slightly different spellings, too. Find something about yourself you don't like? If it's posted by a friend, ask them to take it down. Or try contacting the site administrator and request they remove any unwanted content.

CHECK PRIVACY SETTINGS

The privacy settings on your favorite website or social network may have changed since you last checked. Take time to understand current settings so you know just what you are sharing, and update them if there are things you don't want public.

USE STRONG PASSWORDS

Whether email or banking, it's a good idea to have different passwords for different sites. Change the passwords across your various accounts to a combination of words, numbers and symbols that are easy for you to remember but hard for others to guess.

UPDATE SOFTWARE

Computer viruses and spyware can wreak havoc on your computer. Check for software updates you may have previously ignored or download one of the many safe programs available online to ensure you have the most up-to-date security for your system. You can even schedule automatic updates and let your computer do the work for you!

THINK BEFORE YOU POST

Your digital footprint is more than the information available about you on the Web; it is about your interactions too. Before you put anything online, ask yourself if it's something you really want others to see or know about you.

MAINTAIN YOUR MOBILE DEVICE

Take time to understand your mobile device settings and set a password. It is also a good idea to review any apps you have downloaded and their information-sharing policies. Delete ones you do not use.

BUILD A POSITIVE REPUTATION

Use your online presence to build a positive reputation for yourself and inspire others! Start a blog about the good things happening in your community, make a virtual fundraising campaign for a cause you're passionate about, or text a compliment to a friend.

Additional Information

- **Family Online Safety Institute** - an international, non-profit organization, working to make the online world safer for kids and their families: www.fosi.org
- **Internet Society** - a global organization dedicated to leadership for Internet policy, technology standards and future development: www.internetsociety.org
- **Media Smarts** - Canada's Centre for Digital and Media Literacy: www.mediasmarts.ca
- **The 2Learn.ca Education Society** - advocating and sharing technology-enriched teaching, learning and leadership options - www.2learn.ca



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