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# July 2017: Digital Footprints

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## Why This Matters Now

A digital footprint is everything you post on your social media accounts, in comment sections, while playing an app or sending an email. Every retweet, like, or +1 is part of your online history, and could potentially be seen by people who are outside your circle of friends and acquaintances. Think of it as your digital DNA. Whether students are preparing for employment right after high school, higher education or even looking ahead to the day that they launch a post-graduate career, their digital footprints are a direct path back to their likes, dislikes and values. College admissions officers are regularly researching students online, as are potential employers. According to one Execunet survey, more than 80% of job recruiters use search engines to learn about candidates, and more than 40% admit to eliminating candidates as a result of information they found online. Teaching students to tread carefully on social media, as well as to learn how to use their online presence to their professional advantage will help them build and maintain an impressive virtual brand.

## Resources

### Article

#### [How Clean Is Your Digital Footprint?](#)

A short and newsy introduction to help familiarize students with the concept and emphasize the role that a seemingly harmless Facebook post might play in their future. Use the conversation starters (which you can access in the toolbar to the right of the story) to inspire conversation about the positive and negative effects of digital footprints. So often people stress the dangers of “digital dirt” rather than the potential advantages of a strong online presence. Encourage students to read the follow-on article [#ExploreMuseums: Using Social Media to Improve Your Future Prospects](#).

This is a great time to discuss the power of LinkedIn profiles as online snapshots of your personal brands. Everyone is doing it – even high school students – and this social medium is often a first stop online for admissions officers and recruiters. [Sachin Rekhi](#), an entrepreneur who sold his business Connected to LinkedIn and then worked there for a couple of years, encourages high school students to get creative with their LinkedIn profiles. He says, “Use the summary section to describe your aspirations, passions and objectives in what you are looking for in your career, include volunteer experience and unpaid internships, and detail projects that you are most proud of in-school and outside school using rich media, like videos and graphics.”

### Lesson Plan

[FaceSpace Project Lesson 3: Social Network Etiquette](#): This lesson supports further exploration of students’ digital footprints. The “Creating an Online Persona” handout included with this plan is especially relevant to a discussion on practical ways that students can manage their online reputations. Feeling ambitious? This is actually part three of a five-part lesson series on workplace and social media etiquette that guides students (working in teams) through the creation of their own FaceSpace poster. The assignment: *You have just been hired by Knowledge@Wharton High School to create a FaceSpace page for teenagers about workplace expectations. Knowledge@Wharton High School wants you to create a resource for high school students who want to know more about social networking, workplace communications and etiquette, and what work expectations exist outside the office.* Start with [Lesson 1](#) and search subsequent lessons if you want detailed resources for each phase in the build-out.

### Hands-on Learning

High school students love contests! Why not fuel that competitive spirit by extending your digital footprint lesson to online article analysis during our first annual [Commenting Contest](#). Online life is deeper than Instagram posts, as the

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The online journal for students interested in finding out more about the world of commenting sections in publications like the *New York Times* reflect. *The NYT* receives more than [9,000 comments per day](#), and covers its most dedicated commenters like a traditional news beat. Help students become critical thinkers and communicators online by assigning them KWHS articles to read and [comment on](#). If they participate in one of our bi-weekly contests this summer (starting June 26, 2017), they just might win! Remember, they need to [sign up](#) with KWHS to comment (it's free, quick, and harmless). Students should also know to beware of Internet trolls. Spark classroom conversation by wading into the [dark side of online commenting](#).

### **Video Glossary**

Provide an extra layer of learning for your students with our video glossary. Here, Wharton professors define terms: [Brand](#), [Online Privacy](#), [Social Capital](#), [Social Influence](#) and [Social Network](#)

### **KWHS Quote of the Month**

“Having a Twitter feed I can show during an interview or [use to] attract attention to myself can translate into a skill to add to my résumé.” – Jessamyn Moore, aspiring curator who created #ExploreMuseums