

Educator Toolkit: Technology and Privacy

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Why This Matters Now

Not long ago, Knowledge@Wharton High School gathered insights about the future of technology from some of the most faithful technologists, the digital natives of Generation Z. Delphine Leoue Ngoko Djomo, 18 and a freshman at the University of Miami, Florida, had this to say: “Technology is no longer the tool or hobby of a few, but the core medium of communication, education and livelihoods of people across the globe. Technology is the way we do our finances. It is how we stay connected to the people closest to us who are the furthest from us. It is the way we engage with our political climates and media organizations. It is how we get our news. It is how we fall in love.”

Indeed, technology is ubiquitous, invasive and essential. We need to learn how to live with it and understand where we, as humans, fit into the digital landscape, not just as data points, but also as people with public posts and private lives. As technology facilitates our education, recreation, commerce and information exchange, it becomes increasingly difficult to protect our privacy. All the while, technology is watching – and listening – and sharing.

Technology and privacy is a complex issue with many dimensions. At the core, however, is an awareness that true privacy is lost in the digital age, requiring us to tread carefully with our digital decisions. According to a recent article in our sister publication *Knowledge@Wharton*, “People generate millions of points of information about themselves all the time. You create data every time you push the ‘Like’ button on Facebook, search for something on Google, make a purchase on Amazon, watch a show on Netflix, send a text on your mobile phone or do a transaction with your bank, insurer, retail store, credit card company or hotel. There’s also medical data, property records, financial and tax information, criminal histories, and the like. You’re generating data all the time when you’re using the Internet, and this can very quickly add up to a lot of features about you,” says Aaron Roth, computer and information science professor at Penn Engineering.

Start the conversation about privacy, so students can become more tuned into their behaviors, as well as the regulatory landscape as it works to protect their information.

Resources

Article

[Is TikTok Invading Your Privacy?](#)

Video-sharing platform TikTok is an active part of teens’ lives, with some 110 million users in the U.S. alone, according to Sensor Tower. U.S. Senators Chuck Schumer and Tom Cotton recently reached out to the U.S. intelligence community asking them to assess the national security risks of TikTok and other Chinese-owned platforms. This is a great conversation starter to get your students thinking about the issue of trust on the Internet and why it may be important for all of us to start valuing our privacy more.

Lesson Plan

[Your Online Financial Life](#)

This lesson plan, developed by top financial educator Brian Page, will help you and your students delve a bit deeper into the reality of online life with the help of the K@W article *Privacy on the Web: Is it a Losing Battle?* Related tools, like a guided-notes worksheet (with answers) and an assessment rubric, will help students navigate and discuss the text, and take actions to protect personal information and adopt safe password rules.

Explore our full library of educator toolkits [HERE!](#)

Hands-on Learning

As technology advances, our data seems to flow in all directions, making it that much more difficult to protect our privacy. We can, however, still monitor our digital dirt, so to speak, and be aware of our online reputation by assessing our “public” online persona. This is especially important as students look beyond high school to college, employment, and whatever their future holds.

Distribute the following links to students and encourage them to do some online sleuthing about a very important topic – themselves. Have them either write or discuss what they discover. Any surprises? How will they move forward with this baseline knowledge of what is available about them online?

- Go to the Reach Branding Online ID Calculator: www.onlineidcalculator.com/index.php and answer the survey questions.
- Set up an “Ego Search” with a Google News Alert of your name at <https://www.google.com/alerts>. Want an option to Google? Here’s one: <https://www.talkwalker.com/alerts>. By setting up alerts, you will receive an email (at a designated account) whenever your name appears.

Video Glossary

Provide an extra layer of learning for your students with our video glossary. Here, Wharton professors define terms: Data, Data Mining, Online Privacy and Regulatory Restrictions.

KWHS Quote of the Month

“Just like in the industrial revolution where there was an entire generation who went through the transition, unaware of the full potential of what they had, I believe we are in the midst of a digital revolution, one where we are the guinea-pig generation. We are just learning how to use our technology as a tool and to maximize our efficiency with technology.”
–*High School Student Joseph Gross, Ransom Everglades High School, Miami, U.S. in the KWHS article, [Thoughts from Gen Z on the Future of Technology.](#)*