

# Checklist<sup>1</sup>

*Being a responsible online learner*

## Know what is out there

**1. I am aware of how my identity currently appears online.** This may be in search engine results, current or old social media profiles, or data gathered by the platforms you use.

**2. I am aware of who can see me online.** This may include friends, family, strangers, employers, professors, scholarship bodies, advertisers, online companies like Facebook, and members of online communities such as an online course or gaming community.

**3. I am aware of professional codes of conduct for online behaviour.** The profession you wish to enter (nursing, law, teaching etc.) may have guidelines that are relevant to you even as a student. An example: <https://tinyurl.com/y6usojos>

## Set your goal

**4. I know what type of online identity I would like to have.** You may wish to be as private as possible in all domains, to present one blended identity, or to settle on separate identities for different parts of your life (personal and professional).

## Act accordingly

**5. I have updated (or deleted) each of my social media profiles.** If a profile is visible to employers, make sure it presents an engaging professional identity. Even on a private profile a small amount of public information can be beneficial if it is consistent with your CV.

**6. I think twice before posting online.** Even in private profiles, avoid posts and interactions that would be damaging to your professional life, because in exceptional cases a friend or connection could make them public. Try not to post or respond to posts when angry.

**7. I have tried to remove any unwanted search engine results associated with my identity.** You may need to make a request to the person or platform who posted the information. For extreme cases, seek advice. The [EU “Right to be Forgotten”](#) ruling may be relevant.

**8. I have checked my privacy settings on social media and other platforms.** This is important for controlling what others can see, but also for understanding and limiting how the platform uses or owns your data.

**9. I make an effort to understand online terms of service**, e.g. for Google. This can be difficult, but it gets easier if you make it a habit. You may not be able to change the terms, but you can change how (or whether) you use the service.

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<sup>1</sup> We would like to acknowledge the Digital Footprint MOOC which informed the development of this resource - <https://www.coursera.org/learn/digital-footprint/>.

**10. I think twice before tagging others, or sharing their posts.** Some people are more private than others. Get permission before sharing someone else's private post with a wider audience.

## Create a personal brand (optional)

**11. I present consistent, up-to-date information across my public profiles online.** You may want to use the same profile image across platforms.

**12. I am actively building an online audience and network.** If you feel comfortable being public and that it will benefit your career, this can be a great move. Remember to post regularly, respond in a timely manner, and follow others.

## Top tips

**If you cannot remove unwanted information,** you can instead make it less prominent by curating a more up-to-date, relevant online presence.

**Turn on the “tag review” function, available on Facebook and some other platforms.** This means that you can check what you have been tagged in before it appears on your profile.

# Reflective activity

## *Being a responsible online learner*

*Please complete this activity individually, with access to the Internet. The results are for your personal use. Start by reading the Introduction and then proceed with the activities. You might wish to refer to the video, checklist and further resources while taking this activity. In total the activity should take about 20 minutes. If, after completing the activity, you have further queries, please contact your tutor and support available at your university. Remember to save your completed activity as it will be useful to return to later in your course.*

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## Introduction

Being responsible online is about being aware of your online presence, and its impact on you as well as others. Your online presence can also be described as a “digital footprint”:

*“It’s the data you leave behind when you go online. It’s what you’ve said, what others have said about you, where you’ve been, images you’re tagged in, personal information, social media profiles and much more.”*

(Digital Footprint flyer, <https://tinyurl.com/y79m6m5o>)

Your digital footprint impacts on you professionally because employers and others in your professional life will see aspects of your online presence. It also impacts your data and privacy rights because many online platforms e.g. Facebook and Google gather data from our online behaviour and build up their own profile about us. The things we do online also become part of other people’s digital footprints, e.g. when we tag someone. So it is important that our online behaviour is respectful to others.

This activity is designed to get you thinking about your online presence, and how you can ensure it is beneficial to you (and others).

The definitions we are using (just in case):

*Social media* = interactive online platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Google+, YouTube, Instagram.

*Online platform* = a more general term including many types of websites but especially social media (above), any Google interface, online shopping websites, Uber and Airbnb, and websites that invite you to sign in and personalise your experience.

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## Section 1: Describing my online presence (5 mins)

Tick/mark everything that applies, even if that means multiple ticks in each category.

### *Social media presence*

- I have several social media profiles
- I'm active on social media
- I'm not on social media
- I'm very private online
- I use my online presence to engage an audience
- I'm not interested in having an audience online

### *Search engine results*

- I know what appears when I Google my name
- I don't know where my name appears online

### *Online identity*

- My online presence is more personal than professional
- My online presence is more professional than personal
- I have a blended personal-professional online presence
- I have more than one online identity (e.g. professional identity, gaming community, Reddit)

### *Up-to-date?*

- All my online profiles are up-to-date
- Some of my online profiles are out-of-date
- When I was younger I left a digital presence that is still relevant to me now
- When I was younger I left a digital footprint that is irrelevant or harmful to my current identity

### *Data and privacy*

- I sometimes/often read online terms and conditions
- I never read online terms and conditions
- I have recently reviewed my privacy settings online
- I don't tend to check my privacy settings online

### *Interacting with others*

- I only tag friends/others if I think they would agree to it
- When I tag someone online I don't think about whether they would agree or not
- I seek permission before making a private post more public (e.g. by sharing a screenshot)

I have shared someone's private post without seeking their permission

*Overall*

I'm happy with how I present myself online

I'm not happy with all of my digital footprint

There are some changes I want to make to my online presence

Using the statements you ticked as a basis, write a short description of your online presence in your own words (you can repeat information above and/or include new info).

## Section 2: Documenting my online presence (10 mins)

This step gives you two possible templates for exploring your online presence and deciding what you want to change about it (if anything). Read the descriptions of Step 2a (social media) and Step 2b (Google and DuckDuckGo searches) and complete one of them. If you think that you can do both in 10 minutes – go for it!

### 2a: Social media

List all the social media platforms that you've signed up to (old and new, active or inactive) in the first column. Delete or add names of platforms in the first column as appropriate. Then fill in the other columns. The final column is for deciding whether some action is necessary to ensure your social media presence is working to your benefit.

<b>Social media profile</b> (examples below)	<b>Up-to-date?</b> (Y/N)	<b>Is this public?</b> (Y/N)	<b>Would it be good for my career if employers saw this?</b> (Y/N)	<b>I've checked the terms and conditions for this service</b> (Y/N)	<b>Action(s)</b> (e.g. keep / delete / change privacy settings / read terms and conditions / update content / change the types of post I make / engage more with my audience on this platform)
Facebook					
Snapchat					
Twitter					
Instagram					
Google+					
LinkedIn					
WhatsApp					
Profile for your online course					

## 2b: Google and DuckDuckGo searches

Do a Google search for your full name, or full name plus an important keyword (e.g. hometown, or school name) if your name is not unique. In another browser window or tab, do the same search on DuckDuckGo (another search engine which does not use cookies, so it might show you a less “tailored” set of results that might be more similar to what others see).

List the major results about you (up to 10), and for each result fill in the details below. Again, reflect on whether it would be good for your career for employers to see this, given that it is public, and ask yourself whether any actions need to be taken.

Search result	Did you expect this to be public online? (Y/N)	Would it be good for my career if employers saw this? (Y/N)	Action(s) (eg no action / remove it myself / ask someone else to remove / look into other ways to remove / highlight and link to my professional profile)
1. _____ _____			
2. _____ _____			
3. _____ _____			
4. _____ _____			
5. _____ _____			
6. _____ _____			
7. _____ _____			
8. _____ _____			
9. _____ _____			
10. _____ _____			

### Section 3: Stating my goals (5 mins)

Now you probably know more about your online presence, and you know what actions you can take to improve it. To sum up and reflect upon this, please state a long-term goal you wish to achieve with your online presence. It can relate to any aspect of this activity.

Examples include:

- I want to become more private online, and limit the amount of information people can find out about me.
- I want to create a blended public-private online identity because this matches my interests and career goals.
- I want to engage more with an audience online.
- I want to start reading the terms and conditions for platforms I use.

Once you have done this, write down the first action you will take in this direction – scan through the “Action” columns of Section 2a/2b for inspiration.

Our online identities are always changing, as are our goals and careers. So you might want to repeat this activity at a later date – perhaps in six months or a year, or whenever you next apply for a job or scholarship – to see whether you are achieving your goals. If you want to do this, write down a date for repeating the activity below, and put the date in your calendar 😊

**My long-term goal is to...**

**My first action will be to...**

**I plan to do this reflection again on \_\_\_\_\_ [date in calendar].**

# Further resources

## *Learning effectively with technology*

### General

**Digital Footprint.** CourseEra MOOC taught by Louise Connelly and Nicola Osborne at the University of Edinburgh. Explains the concept of a 'digital footprint' and provides guidance on how to manage your online identity:

<https://www.coursera.org/learn/digital-footprint/>

**Jennicam Revisited.** Podcast story about 19-year-old Jennifer Ringley, one of the first people to share their life extensively online: <https://gimletmedia.com/episode/5-5-jennicam-revisited/>

**RightClick.** Interactive resource from Robert Gordon University, containing guidance, hints and tips for engaging and being responsible on specific social media platforms:

<http://www.rgu.ac.uk/staff-and-current-students/rightclick/>

**University of Exeter iTest.** A short quiz from the University of Exeter to find out how you can improve the way you use technology to make you more effective in your studies:

<http://wip.exeter.ac.uk/collaborate/itest/>

**What does your digital footprint say about you?** TEDxYouth 8-minute talk by digital education expert and blogger, Nicola Osborne:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RVX8ZSAR4OY>

### Being professional online

**Dear students, what you post can wreck your life.** A blog post (which also contains positive advice!) by Thao Nelson, a lecturer at Indiana University, posted on *The Conversation*:

<https://theconversation.com/dear-students-what-you-post-can-wreck-your-life-79224>

### Data and privacy rights

**The Privacy Paradox: Note to Self.** Podcast from US National Public Radio, containing five days' worth of challenges and resources for "taking back your digital identity":

<https://project.wnyc.org/privacy-paradox/>

Includes a quiz, **What's your Privacy Personality?** (Shrigger, Realist, or Believer):

<https://wnyc.typeform.com/to/CWAeSB>

**Who owns your data? (Hint: It's not you).** A five-minute video from PhD Comics:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y1txYjoSQQc>

**Why what Facebook knows about you could matter offline.** 46-minute podcast from the *On Point* podcast (NPR): <http://www.wnyc.org/story/why-what-facebook-knows-about-you-could-matter-offline/>

**Facebook can track your browsing even after you've logged out, judge says.** Article from July 2017, in the *Guardian*. The responsibility for keeping browsing history is the responsibility of the user: <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2017/jul/03/facebook-track-browsing-history-california-lawsuit>

**WebChoices: Digital Advertising Alliance's Consumer Choice Tool.** This browser-based tool allows you to opt out of “interests-based” (targeted) advertising from companies who have signed up to the scheme: [optout.aboutads.info/](http://optout.aboutads.info/)

**Who targets me?** A tool and project aimed exposing interest-based political advertising in UK election campaigns, which appear as FaceBook adverts: <https://whotargets.me/>

## Open online courses

**Managing your identity online.** FutureLearn MOOC by the University of Leeds on how to present yourself online:  
<https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/online-identity>