

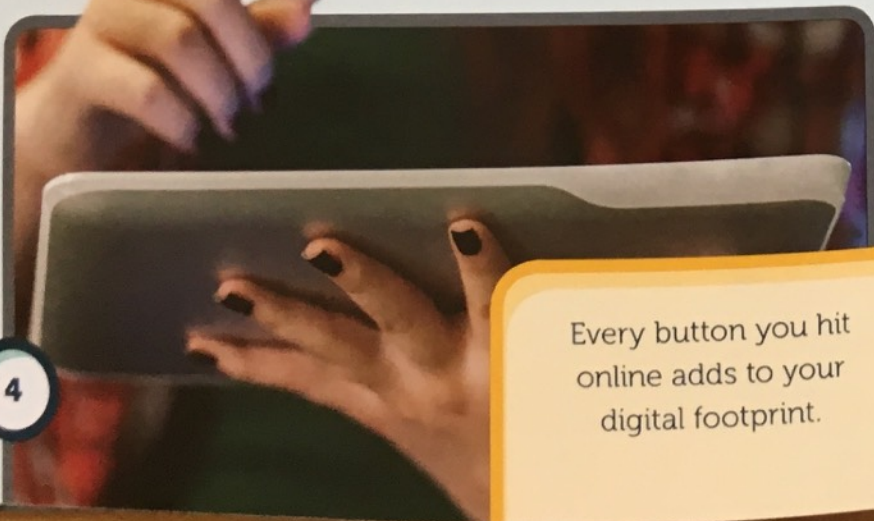
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WHAT IS A DIGITAL FOOTPRINT?

Every time you use the Internet, you leave a little bit of your personal information behind. This trail is called your digital footprint. It is as if you are walking on a trail and leaving breadcrumbs behind. Each breadcrumb represents a digital footprint. Each breadcrumb is small. But together, they form an entire loaf of bread. Likewise, your individual digital footprints are linked. They form an entire profile—all about you!

Your digital footprint contains pieces of

information. It may include your name, address, phone number, and birthday. It also contains things you upload and actions you take. You are always leaving digital footprints, even if they are not visible. As you use the Internet, your activity is tracked and recorded. These records add only a tiny bit of information to your entire digital footprint. Your digital footprint grows larger in a very short amount of time. Each newly loaded website, “Like” on Facebook, and e-mail draft are recorded and remembered forever.



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Every button you hit online adds to your digital footprint.

THINK ABOUT IT

How many websites do you think you visit in a day? Now that you have thought about it, is the number higher than you expected? How might the number of sites you visit contribute to your digital footprint?

Imagine shopping online for a new pair of jeans. First, you land on the store's homepage. By clicking on the “jeans” tab, you are taken to a new webpage. Clicking an image to view more details opens another page. Each action you take is traced and recorded. Those actions are part of your digital footprint.

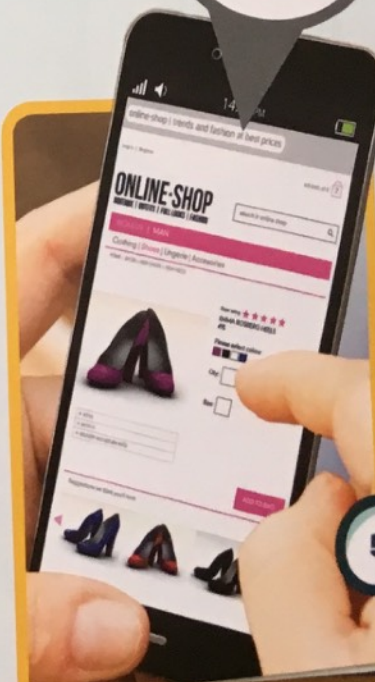
The more you use the Internet, the larger your digital footprint grows. Your digital footprint is not a bad thing or a good thing. But learning about your digital footprint can help you understand what happens to your information online. It can help you see why it is important to be careful about what you share. Knowing how your digital footprint works keeps you safer online.

3.1 billion

Approximate number of global Internet users in March 2015.

- Your Internet activity is tracked and recorded.
- As Internet use increases, digital footprints grow larger.
- Hundreds of pieces of data contribute to a person's digital footprint.

Shopping online leaves digital breadcrumbs behind.



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DOES MY INFORMATION STAY ONLINE FOREVER?

Have you ever created an account on a website? You might have entered your first and last name. You probably had to provide an e-mail address. People enter a lot of personal information on websites. But many people do not think about what happens with that information.

College recruiters might search your name online.

E-mail, chat, and social media allow you to share your interests and talents. You may think only friends and family can see what you share and write. You may also think that deleting information makes it go away forever. But information you share over e-mail and social media never truly goes away. It often can be seen by many others. Future employers, college recruiters,



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Taking selfies is fun, but think before you share one online.



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Percent of social media users between the ages of 9 and 16 who have their Facebook pages set to private.

business clients, and teachers may be able to find it. It is viewable even if it is years old. The information might not be bad. But who you are in the future may be different from who you are today.

What you post on the Internet can be seen by anyone who follows you. This is especially true for mobile applications such as Instagram and Snapchat. You may also be sharing your exact location. Check the location settings on your device to see what you are sharing.

- Many Internet users do not know how their personal information is used online.
- Things you posted on the Internet in the past can still be seen in the future.
- You could be sharing your exact location, so check the location settings on your device.

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HOW DO WEBSITES KNOW WHERE I AM?

Your house, the grocery store, and your school all have street addresses. The Internet network you use also has an address. An Internet company assigns each network an Internet Protocol (IP) address. Imagine you and your family members each use a different computer while at home. Each of your computers is connected to the same Internet network. That network has an IP address. It is unique to your house. Your school has its own IP address. At school, you connect

to the Internet through the school's IP address.

IP addresses share small bits of information with websites. It may tell websites your family's name or your school's name. It could share your phone number or your physical location. It may also share a record of your personal Internet activity. Websites use this information to change how they interact with you. Imagine you go online to find the nearest sporting goods store. The

Your school has its own IP address.

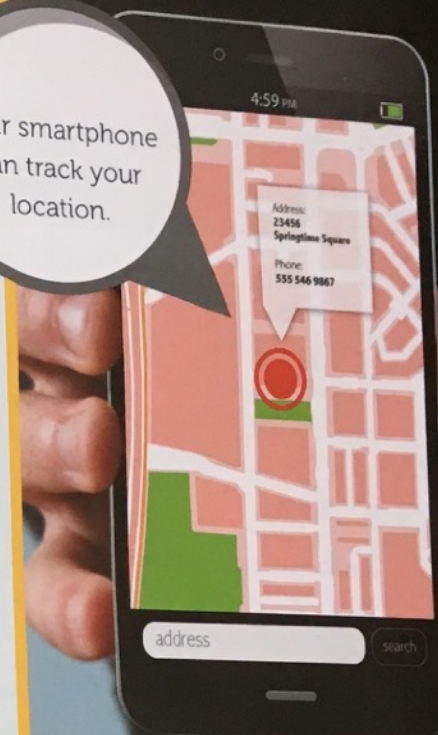
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store's website may use your location to give you more accurate results.

Your smartphone can also share your location over the Internet. Your phone uses its global positioning system (GPS) to find you. It connects your phone with a nearby cell phone tower. The tower can now track your exact location. But your location is shared over your data network, too. It is possible for people to hack the network and learn your location. Unless you need to use it, keep the location tracker off. Ask an adult to show you how.

Your smartphone can track your location.



1.6 billion

Number of IP addresses in the United States in 2015.

- Each Internet network has its own IP address.
- Websites can find a user's personal information based on an IP address.
- Your smartphone's map feature shares your location with cell phone towers.

FIND MY FRIENDS

Find My Friends is a mobile application. It accesses your contacts and your smartphone's map feature. You can connect with friends and family on the app. When you share your location, an alert becomes visible to your family and friends. Friends who use the app also show up on the map.

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