



**Essential Question:** What is a digital footprint, and what does yours convey?

## Learning Overview and Objectives

*Overview:* Students learn that they have a digital footprint and that the information that makes up this digital footprint can be searched; copied and passed on; seen by a large, invisible audience, and can be persistent. Students then learn that they can take some control over their digital footprint based on what they post online.

Students watch the *Privacy Student Intro Video – The Digital Footprint* to learn how information online can easily get out of one’s control. They then examine the blog posts, photos, and profiles of two fictional host applicants for a TV show called “Trillion Dollar Footprint” and decide which would make a more **honest** host who **works well with others**. A key message of the lesson is that although online information provides an incomplete picture of a person, it can still affect how others view that person.

### objectives

*Students will:*

- Learn that they have a digital footprint and that information from it can be searched; copied and passed on; seen by a large, invisible audience, and can be persistent
- Recognize that people’s online information can be helpful or harmful to their reputation and image
- Consider their own digital footprints and what they want those footprints to be like in the future

## Materials and Preparation

### Materials

- *Privacy Student Intro Video – The Digital Footprint*
- **Choose a Host Student Handout**
- **My Digital Footprint Student Handout**

### Preparation

- Download the *Privacy Student Intro Video – The Digital Footprint*, preview video, and be prepared to play video for the class
- Copy the **Choose a Host Student Handout**, one for every four students
- Copy the **My Digital Footprint Student Handout**, one for every student

### Parent Resources

- Send parents the **Protecting and Respecting Privacy Online Parent Tip Sheet**
- Send parents the link to the *Privacy Parent/Teacher Intro Video*
- **Facebook for Parents Video:** [www.common sense media.org/facebook-parents](http://www.common sense media.org/facebook-parents)
- **Talking About Sexting Video:** [www.common sense media.org/talking-about-sexting](http://www.common sense media.org/talking-about-sexting)
- **Tips for Social Networking Video:** [www.common sense media.org/talking-about-sexting](http://www.common sense media.org/talking-about-sexting)



# Trillion Dollar Footprint

## Key Vocabulary

- **Digital Footprint:** All of the information online about a person either posted by that person or others, intentionally or unintentionally
- **Online Search:** Inputting key words into an online search engine that sifts through them and then shows related listings
- **Persistent:** Lasting a long time, if not forever, such as information that one posts online that does not go away because it is passed on and spread
- **Imagery:** Drawings or illustrations, often symbolic

## teaching plans

### Introduce

**ASK** *How many of you have ...*

- *Created a profile on an Internet site?*
- *Filled out a form online?*
- *Chatted on AIM or GChat?*
- *Sent an email?*
- *Typed your name into Google? Were there any results about you?* (Allow students to provide examples of what they found.)

**EXPLAIN** that filling out a form, sending an email to a friend, posting a photo, and pretty much everything one does online – even the simple act of visiting a website or using a search engine – leaves a trail. This trail, called a digital footprint, is made of bits and pieces of information on one’s computer and on other computers and servers around the world, which allow other people to learn about you.

### Teach 1: Play Privacy Intro Video

**REVIEW** the Key Vocabulary with students.

**SHOW** students the *Student Intro Video – The Digital Footprint*. Before starting the video, remind students to carefully observe the imagery in the video and to think about what the images might convey about privacy. Offer students an example of “imagery” – the “Trash Bin” icon on their computer that serves as a “garbage can” for their files.

After the video is over, briefly review the meaning of the following imagery in the video as it relates to privacy.

- **Fingerprint:** Everyone leaves a different mark or unique identifier online that can be traced.
- **Football stadium:** Football games are huge, public events. The Internet is similar.
- **Lighthouse:** The light shines on boats or people that are in the dark. People can find out a lot about others through search engines.
- **Copies and whispering in ear:** Information on the Internet can be forwarded to many others, sometimes after having been altered first.



# Trillion Dollar Footprint

- **Permanent marker:** Once information is online, it is very difficult to take it down because others can copy and distribute it.

**REVIEW** with students the concept that all of the information about someone online makes up his or her digital footprint, and that this information can be searched; copied and passed on; seen by a large, invisible audience, and can become persistent.

## Teach 2: Pick a Host

**ARRANGE** students into groups of four and give each group one copy of the **Choose a Host Student Handout**.

**EXPLAIN** to students that “Trillion Dollar Footprint” is a popular TV show that tours the country looking for teens to compete in a talent show. Tell them you are hiring them to be producers for the show. Explain that their job is to:

- Look over online information of two fictional host applicants, Linda and Jason.
- Decide which applicant should be the host of the show based on who **works better with others** and is more **honest**.
- Role-play TV producers, giving a convincing pitch to the class about which candidate they chose and why.

(See the **Choose a Host Student Handout** for detailed instructions.)

Students work together for 10 to 15 minutes to:

- **READ** the **Choose a Host Student Handout** directions
- **REVIEW** the profiles for Linda and Jason
- **FILL OUT** the feedback form
- **DECIDE** on a candidate

Have groups pitch for the candidate that they selected, coming to the front of the class to promote their choice with evidence from the profiles that supports their pick.

### ASK

- *Do you think the show’s host should be Linda or Jason? Why?*
- *Do you think the candidate will be honest?*
- *Do you think the candidate will work well with others?*

When all groups have made their pitch, **EXPLAIN** to students that neither Jason nor Linda got the host position because the executive producer had too many concerns about both regarding their ability to **work well with others** and be **honest**. They are going to keep looking for other candidates.

**ENCOURAGE** students to examine what assumptions they made about each candidate.

### ASK

- *Did you assume that Linda was dishonest because someone commented that the recipe she supposedly created was not her own? (We don’t know who commented and if their statement is true.)*
- *Did you assume Jason was a jerk because he said he was single on his profile but said that he was married in his personal statement? (Maybe he forgot to change his status.)*
- *Did you assume either Linda or Jason would not work well with others based on aspects of what they wrote in their personal statements?*



# Trillion Dollar Footprint

**REFLECT** on the importance of examining our assumptions when viewing information online. Also encourage students to think about how a digital footprint can be somewhat out of your control if others post information about you that is untrue or damaging. Then point out how it can be somewhat in your control because you can make decisions about what to post about yourself or what to send to others.

## Wrap Up and Assess

You can use these questions to assess your students' understanding of the lesson objectives.

### ASK

- *Who helped to shape Linda's and Jason's digital footprints?* (They did, people who commented, news sources.)
- *Can you tell what a person is really like offline based on what you find online?* (To some degree. It depends on the size of their digital footprint and how accurate the information is.)
- *What are some other types of information that make up your "digital footprint"?* (Photos of you online, listings of you on sports team.)

**REVIEW** with students that the decision of the executive producers not to select Linda or Jason based solely on information found online might seem unfair, but that these types of judgments can be a reality. Tell students that others might make judgments about them based only on what is contained in their digital footprints. Encourage students to take an active role in shaping their digital footprints to the extent they are able. However, remind students that information is not always under their control.



## Extension Activity

Students design paper footprints that contain the kind of information they would want to appear in their digital footprint 10 years from now. Have students fill out the **My Digital Footprint Student Handout**. The information they put in the Handout could consist of stories about their success in online newspapers, a popular sports blog that they write, or photos of them running for a high governmental position.



## Homework

Students teach the Trillion Dollar Footprint lesson at home. Copy the **Choose a Candidate Student Handout** for all students. Students look through the profiles of Linda and Jason together with their family members. As a family, they choose a candidate to host "Trillion Dollar Footprint." Students should explain that the point of the lesson is to think about how information that is online about someone can impact how others view that person, but that it can be very problematic to make assumptions about others based solely on their digital footprint.



# Trillion Dollar Footprint

## Alignment with Standards — National Educational Technology Standards for Students<sup>®</sup> 2007

(Source: International Society for Technology in Education, 2007):

### 1. Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, and Decision Making

Students use critical-thinking skills to plan and conduct research, manage projects, solve problems, and make informed decisions using appropriate digital tools and resources. Students:

- a. identify and define authentic problems and significant questions for investigation
- b. plan and manage activities to develop a solution or complete a project
- c. collect and analyze data to identify solutions and/or make informed decisions

### 2. Digital Citizenship

Students understand human, cultural and societal issues related to technology and practice legal and ethical behavior. Students:

- a. advocate and practice safe, legal, and responsible use of information and technology
- b. exhibit a positive attitude towards using technology that supports collaboration, learning, and productivity
- c. demonstrate personal responsibility for lifelong learning
- d. exhibit leadership for digital citizenship