PRIVACY AND DIGITAL FOOTPRINTS
Secret Sharer

Essential Question: How do you respect the privacy of others online?

Learning Overview and Objectives

Overview: Students look beyond protecting their own privacy to respecting the privacy of others online.

Students read and analyze case studies about students who have compromised the privacy of someone else online by tagging, copying, and distributing that person's photos or video, or sharing the person's personal information. Students then debate some of the thornier ethical questions that have bubbled up in the case studies, and then generate ways to protect other people's privacy online.

objectives

Students will:

- Learn that it is the responsibility of digital media users to respect the personal information and privacy of others

- Understand how putting information about others online could compromise their own reputation or their relationships with others

- Generate ideas about how to respect the privacy of others

Materials and Preparation

Materials
- **Privacy of Others Student Handout**

Preparation
- Copy the **Privacy of Others Student Handout** for all students
- Review the **Privacy of Others Student Handout—Teacher Version**

Parent Resources
- Send parents the **Protecting and Respecting Privacy Online Parent Tip Sheet**
- Send parents the link to the *Privacy Parent/Teacher Intro Video*

Key Vocabulary

- **Phishing:** The illegal practice of gathering information such as user names, passwords, and financial information through dishonest means

- **Blog:** A Web journal or log that can be either private or public and is often posted to regularly with text entries, video, and more

teaching plans

Introduce

EXPLAIN that people generally worry about protecting their own privacy, but that it is also important to think about how to respect the privacy of others, such as family and friends. Tell students that they will be analyzing case studies of students who have compromised the online privacy of someone else by tagging, copying, and distributing that person's photos or video, or sharing the person's personal information. They will debate some of the thornier ethical questions that have bubbled up in the case studies and then brainstorm how to respect other people's privacy online.

Teach 1: Decide what should be public

WRITE a (fictional) name, address, and phone number on the blackboard.

ASK *Do you think it's right that I put this information about someone else on the board? Why or why not?*
Sample responses:
- *Yes, that person is not here, so who cares?*
- *No, that's private information; it's not yours to reveal*
- *Depends. If they said it was okay, then it's fine*

ASK *Does your answer change if this person's information were displayed in an even more public place, such as a publicly accessible social networking profile?*
Sample responses:
- *Yes, if it's on a publicly accessible profile, anyone around the world could see it*
- *No, it's not like you're saying something embarrassing about this person*
- *No, private information is private no matter where it's displayed, and the information can put this person's safety at risk*

EXPLAIN that there seems to be a lot more clarity in the offline world about what is okay and what is not to share about others. Say that it is generally agreed that it is not acceptable to share someone else's photos with strangers, for instance. Provide a bit of historical context about how the Internet is still pretty new (i.e., it only started to become more widespread in the 1990s), and our definition of ethical online behavior is still developing.

Teach 2: Debate Privacy Case Studies

REVIEW the Key Vocabulary with students

DISTRIBUTE the **Privacy of Others Student Handout**. Refer to the P**rivacy of Others Student Handout—Teacher Version** for guidance on how to teach the case studies. Divide the class into small groups and assign the groups to read and debate different case studies. Ask each group to designate a scribe.

POINT OUT that the case studies are designed to help students understand the thornier ethical issues related to respecting other people's privacy online. Even though the case-study questions are framed in terms of "right" and "wrong," explain that there are a lot of gray areas in the real world. When students are finished reading and

debating the case studies, a representative from each group should report to the entire class about the dilemma they read about and the most important questions that arose in the case study about respecting other people's privacy. (See the last question for each case study.)

Wrap Up and Assess

Use the following activities to assess and reinforce students' understanding of the lesson objectives.

Students DRAW their "web of contacts" on a sheet of paper, which should consist of them in the center with spokes out to friends, family, acquaintances, and people who they interact with online but might not know. They then discuss what information is appropriate to share online about each of the different people or groups they have listed.

- **ENCOURAGE** students to think about what might happen if information they are considering posting about the person or group went public. What if personal information about a close friend intended only for another friend was passed on to friends of friends? Tell students that it is a good rule of thumb to not share information about others that would hurt those people's reputations or feelings if it went public.

- **HELP** students evaluate the gray areas when they are unsure if they should share something about a friend. Sometimes what a student thinks is not embarrassing or private is very much so to someone else. Tell students to first ask the person whose information they're posting if it is okay to share. It is especially important to ask if the topic could be sensitive.

- **EXPLORE** what students' options are if they post something about a friend and later realize that it was inappropriate. Options include telling the friend, taking down or deleting the post (though it might already have been passed on), or contacting the website (if they can't take it down).

GUIDE students in developing a list of "I" commitments about what they will do to respect their friends' privacy. I will respect my friends' privacy online by…

Sample responses:
- *making sure their private messages stay that way*
- *asking permission to post a friend's photo if I think it might be embarrassing to that person*
- *not posting personal information or stories about others without asking first*

Extension Activity

Students review select guidelines below from CyberJournalist.net's "Bloggers' Code of Ethics" (www.cyberjournalist.net/news/000215.php) about how to blog ethically. Ask students if they know what blogging is and what bloggers do. (Bloggers write about their opinions online, regarding either personal matters or a topic of interest to them.) For each guideline below, ask students to offer examples illustrating what might happen to the subject of a blog (i.e., the person who is being written about) if the guideline were broken. When finished, encourage students to think about their responsibilities online to others.

- **Be Honest and Fair:** Make certain that weblog entries, quotations, headlines, photos, and all other content do not misrepresent.

- **Minimize Harm:** Be sensitive when seeking or using interviews or photographs of those affected by tragedy or grief.

- **Be Accountable:** Admit mistakes and correct them promptly.

Alignment with Standards – National Educational Technology Standards for Students© 2007

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

1. Creativity and Innovation

    a. apply existing knowledge to generate new ideas, products, or processes
    b. use multiple processes and diverse perspectives to explore alternative solutions

2. Communication and Collaboration

    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