Your Digital Footprint

Are you wondering what happens to the information you share online? Are you worried about posting details about yourself on the Internet? Would you like to know how to better share your personal information? Making sure you understand how your data is stored, shared, and found online is an important part of protecting yourself online. Your digital footprint, or the trail of data left behind by users on digital devices, and how it is maintained is an important aspect of your online safety. This trail of data not only builds an online reputation, but will follow you into the future and even into your offline life.

How to Understand Your Digital Footprint

A. **While browsing the web (Passive User Footprint)**

Cookies and Browsing History

1. **Browsing History**: You can clear your browser's History or manage settings to customize when or how long your browser retains your History.

2. **Cookies**: Cookies are small files, consisting of letters and numbers, placed on your computer, tablet, phone, or similar device, when you use that device to visit a web site. Cookies are widely used by web site owners to make their web sites operate, work more efficiently, and provide analytic information (Intel). You can turn Cookies off in your browser's Preferences.

B. **While adding content to the web (Active User Footprint)**

1. **Community Member**: As members of any community, we should be conscious of how we present ourselves in public arenas, including the Internet. Even though it is possible to delete content from online profiles, or cancel an account altogether, the data was shared and could be saved by other users or by the entity or service being accessed.

2. **Sharing**: Sharing our lives in images, videos, and text online is an exciting part of living in the age of the Internet. As active online users, being aware of what is happening to the information you share is an important step in managing your digital footprint. Being informed about the tools available will help you share the content you want others to see, but at the same time keep what is private away from those who might misuse it.

3. **Staying Informed**: Read, or be aware of, a web site's or service's Privacy Policy. The fact that a web site even has a Privacy Policy should alert you to the fact that you are interacting with a service that is managing YOUR information, data, and content. Generally, once you share, your content is no longer your own.

C. **How to manage your digital footprint (Re-cap)**

1. Changing Your Computer's Settings (Cookies and Browser History). You can clear your browser's History or manage settings to your preference.

2. Leaving a Trail Online with Cookies. You can turn Cookies off in your browser's Preferences.

3. Add Extra Measures of Management

D. There are services (for example, [Disconnect](#)) which can be added on to your browser and can help prevent sharing even more of your data/information.

Activity

Each time we interact with computers on the Internet, we leave behind data. Sometimes this digital footprint is helpful. Our browser history allows us to easily find web sites we have visited previously, and web site cookies can help make our online experiences more personal. Knowing how to monitor and erase this footprint, however, is important to keeping your information safe online, especially if you interact with public computers and networks. Follow the steps below, to practice viewing and deleting your browser history and cookies.

1. Open the Internet browser you use most often (for example, Chrome, Firefox, Internet Explorer, or Safari).

2. Find your browsing history.

3. If you use your history to revisit web sites, look through what information is recorded here. If you are using a public computer or would like to delete this information, try "clearing" this history.

4. Locate the option for deleting cookies in your browser and "clear" them.

5. Explore the other privacy options available on your browser, and remove data or update your preferences as you like.

SOURCES AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Digital Footprint: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digital_footprint

Managing Your Digital
Footprint: https://sites.google.com/site/digcitizenshipadventures/managing-your-digital-footprint

Digital Reputation: http://www.cybersmart.gov.au/Parents/Cyber issues/Digital reputation.aspx

Digital Footprint: http://www.cybersmart.gov.au/Kids/Get the facts/Digital footprint.aspx

The Nine Companies That Know More About You Than Google or
Facebook: http://qz.com/213900/the-nine-companies-that-know-more-about-you-than-google-or-facebook/