

4.1.

Present yourself to the world

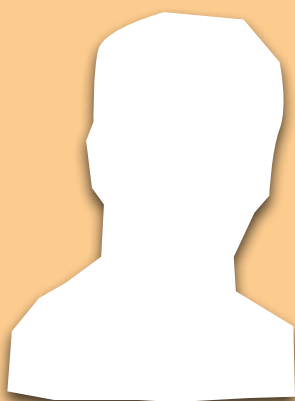
Identity

The state of having unique identifying characteristics held by no other person or thing. The individual characteristics by which a person or thing is recognized.¹⁸



Everyone has their own identity, which is determined by a long list of characteristics. Name as many aspects as you can, that shape your identity in real life.

PASSPORT



NAME:

DISTINGUISHING
FEATURES:

ASPIRES TO:

INTERESTS:

OTHER:

Just as in the offline world, you develop an online identity when you are active on the web.



When online, your identity is shaped by a number of different aspects. Can you name a few of these?

1 the photos you post of yourself

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

¹⁸ Collins (2012), 'Identity' (online), <http://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/identity>, consulted on 8/11/2012.

Daniel Solove
The Future of Reputation

"Gossip can unfairly stain a person's reputation; it often exists as a bundle of half-truths and incomplete tales."¹⁹

My social networking profile?
It's my online identity.



L'uboš

Your online reputation is often based on the details people find about you, the data you yourself have published and the images of you available on the web.



The information others may find on the web can represent you in the wrong way. Of course, much of this information may be taken out of context. But this is irrelevant, because once someone has seen an image or content that relates to you they will have already formed an opinion about you.



What impression do these images convey?



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Blank lined area for writing.



Blank lined area for writing.

I know that universities are going to look me up online, so I've decided to create a really strong, positive profile. If they're going to go looking then I might as well make the most of that and show them what I want them to see!

Being online is great, none of my friends are into the same music as I am and some of them think the way I dress is a bit weird. But online I'm accepted, I can find others who think in the same way that I do, they get me, I don't have to pretend to be someone I'm not.



Are there any other situations where your online profile can be used positively?

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¹⁹ Solove, D.J. (2007), 'The Future of Reputation', New Haven: Yale University Press, p. 189.

4.2. Me, myself and I

Persona

The particular type of character that a person seems to have, which is often different from their real or private character.²⁰

➔ Your identity is not a fixed state; not only can it change over time, but one person can also manage multiple identities depending on the context they find themselves in. Can you define the different identities you might adopt in the following situations?

School

YOU



Home

(e.g. with your parents; your grandparents; your brothers and sisters)

Local community

Job market

- Responsible young person
- Youth worker
- Employee at the local bakery on Sundays

Social network communities

²⁰ Cambridge Dictionaries online (2013), 'persona' (online), <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/british/persona?q=persona>, consulted on 19/12/2012.

➔ Select four of the “different” identities you’ve adopted in the previous exercise and fill in the requested information in the identity map.


Situation:

Characteristics:

How I communicate:

Activities:

YOU



Situation:

Characteristics:

How I communicate:

Activities:

Situation:

Characteristics:

How I communicate:

Activities:

Situation:

Characteristics:

How I communicate:

Activities:

➔ Many social networks now provide users with the opportunity to categorise their online friends into different “groups” and choose what sort of content to share with each group. What sort of groups would you find it helpful to create and what level of access would you give to your “friends” in each?

	Sort of group	Level of access
1	Close school friends	
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		

4.3. The truth, and nothing but the truth?

Deception

Involves acting in such a way that leads another person to believe something that you yourself do not believe to be true.²¹

When constructing our online identities, the question often arises as to whether we always need to provide accurate information about who we are. Where do we draw the line between conscious shaping of our identities and “**Identity Deception**”?

➔ What do you think of the scenarios below? Do you agree with the actions of these people? Is it acceptable to do this? Are there better courses of action that could have been taken?

▶ **Sarah** is 12, but really wants to have an account on Facebook. As the terms and conditions of the site state that she must be at least 13, she creates a profile where she presents herself as an 18 year old girl.

Is it acceptable? Why?

A better course of action would have been to ...

▶ Though **Tom** is a real party boy, he has created a public profile on LinkedIn which only shows the degrees he has obtained in school and some hobbies that might convince employers to give him a job. He doesn't mention his love of dancing and partying because he thinks this could give the wrong impression.

Is it acceptable? Why?

A better course of action would have been to ...

▶ Though the social networking website that **Laura** wants to register on demands her real name, she decides to use a false name.

Is it acceptable? Why?

A better course of action would have been to...

²¹ Truth about Deception (2012), 'What is the Definition of Deception?' (online), <http://www.truthaboutdeception.com/lying-and-deception/ways-people-lie/what-is-deception.html>, consulted on 8/11/2012.

- ▶ **Bart** has a problem he doesn't want to talk about with his parents or his friends. He hides his identity in an online support network, so he can speak more openly.

Is it acceptable? Why?

A better course of action would have been to ...

- ▶ In school **David** is always very shy, but when he plays his favourite online game he absolutely loves to take the lead and fight other players.

Is it acceptable? Why?

A better course of action would have been to ...

- ▶ **Julie** just opened a restaurant. To encourage potential clients to come and have dinner, she creates a profile under a different name, writes a very positive review of her restaurant and encourages some of her close family and friends to do the same.

Is it acceptable? Why?

A better course of action would have been to ...

- ▶ **Anne** and **Sophie** are huge fans of the Lord of the Rings movies. When they communicate with other fans online, they pretend to be descendants of the Elf people and present themselves as Amarië and Aredhel.

Is it acceptable? Why?

A better course of action would have been to ...