

5.1. Undercover in the online world

Anonymity

The quality or state of being unknown or unacknowledged.²²



Find out the story of this writer whose statue you can visit in front of the Vajdahunyad Castle in the City Park of Budapest, Hungary. How does this relate to anonymity?

Do you think it is still possible to remain anonymous in the world today?



Your name is always somewhere on the net, for example on the website of your school. Also, your friends can publish a photo and add your name without telling you.

Hunting down your digital footprint

Even when you don't publish your private information online, it is still possible that your personal details and preferences are known by others. Look at the example below; can you think of 4 other ways in which people can find out personal information about you?

1 My entries in search sites are investigated in order to identify my preferences. These are used for advertising.

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²² The Free Dictionary, 'Anonymity' (online), <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/anonymity>, consulted on 07/12/2012.

Privacy

Someone's right to keep their personal matters and relationships secret.²³



Yorick

I'm worried about what government agencies know about my whereabouts and my doings. They are not in my friend's list but I don't know how far they can see behind my walls. My settings aren't on public, but I'm not sure that keeps them out.

"If you don't want your private information to appear on the internet, then don't post it!"

True, but even if none of my friends or me would post information online, still, some of my personal information is collected and used.

True, but what about the information friends publish about you? What kind of things do you prefer your friends not to post about you?

Being undercover online? Why? If people are not online in some way or the other, this makes them appear very suspicious!

Do you agree with these opinions or not? Why?

²³ Cambridge Dictionaries online (2013), 'privacy' (online), <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/british/privacy?q=privacy>, consulted on 19/12/2012.

5.2.

A right to be forgotten – deleting a digital footprint

➔ What if you could create digital expiry dates, so that information would be automatically deleted at a time you had chosen years back?

What sort of content would you want to keep forever?

BEST BEFORE

What pieces of information do you think you should delete before you start looking for a job?

➔ List pieces of information about yourself that you know are online and give an expiry date for each.

BEST BEFORE

BEST BEFORE

BEST BEFORE

BEST BEFORE

BEST BEFORE

BEST BEFORE

➔ To share or not to share, that is the question!

While some people prefer to keep their profile private, others want to share the smallest detail of their life with the world. Some people love to read all about other people's lives, whilst others get a little annoyed at being inundated with useless information...

What do you think people should share and what shouldn't they share?

Should share:

Shouldn't share:

➡ Read the stories below and write down your comments and thoughts.

I teach IT in high school and some of my pupils befriended me on Facebook. Yesterday, I noticed that one of my students joined a group called "Legalise Marijuana". Even though I have no direct evidence, I cannot help but wonder if he is using it. Should I have a word with his mom and dad or maybe it's just nothing and I should keep this to myself?

I want to be a journalist when I leave school, and nowadays you absolutely need to have an online presence. However, I make sure that I only share information that I want people to know and that will show them all the positive aspects of my project. The more people who follow me the better a reputation I will have, people will start to listen - that's the beauty of the internet - when things go viral there's no stopping them.

Sure, there are risks there, I mean we all have an online reputation, but I think people miss the point really - because we can take control. I've decided who I want to be my "friend" online - yes I have about 460 "friends", but they don't all have access to everything, Most social networking sites let you do that, but people don't set their profile up like that. Privacy is down to each and every one of us in the end.

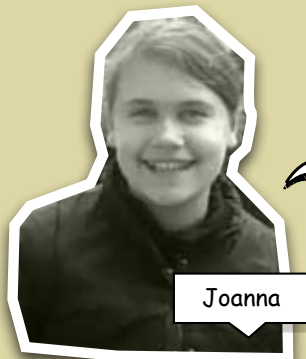
As a recruiter in my company, I am looking almost daily for new people to come and work for us. Of course, our selection is mainly based on a person's motivation letter, job resumé, education and skills. However, before inviting someone for an interview, we search their name on Google and in social networking sites. The image we get from people's pictures, online activities, published content and other information written about them will also play a major role in our decision.

I was reading my messages and all of a sudden I discovered a mail from the taxation department stating that only part of the reimbursement had been made. The message said that I had to send a confirmation of my bank account details. Of course this was a scam and I should have realized that an official institution would never ask me for such sensitive information by mail. The thieves collected a large sum of money from my account.

I've done some bad things in my life, but I have been convicted for them and have served my time in prison. However, I'm still referred to as a criminal on several websites on the internet. I have demanded that all these websites remove this information. I have the right to a second chance, and nobody needs to know about my past.



Do you know how long your school records are kept for? Who do you think has access to them? What happens to your records when you leave the school?



Joanna

On Facebook, only the people I authorize can see my photos and read what I publish. I purposely limit access to my private information.

➡ Where would you put yourself on this scale of online sharing behaviour?

Anonymous

I don't like to share much information about myself with others. I only use social media when I have to.

Protective

I'm not going to spread just about everything about myself online, you always need to be careful, but I do like to share my thoughts and experiences with my friends.

Share with the world!

I haven't done anything wrong, so why would I not share it with the rest of the world?



5.3.

Show yourself but not too much!

Sexting

The combination of 'sex' and 'texting' - the sending of sexually explicit messages or images by mobile phone.²⁴

The internet is a great channel to flirt and experiment, especially when you are rather shy in real life. The barriers to approach someone are lower and gradually your confidence to approach someone in real life can grow. But how far will you go?

Explore your boundaries!

How far would you go online? Indicate for each statement how comfortable you would be in this situation. Discuss your answers with someone sitting near you.

1. An online friend you have been chatting with for a while asks you to send a sexy image of yourself.



2. I have looked up some information on the internet, about things I'm a bit too scared or ashamed to ask my parents about.



3. A friend has sent around an image of a girl in our school while she's in the shower; I'm forwarding this to my friends! This is too funny!



Askyourquestions.com

Anonymous, 15 years

"I'm very shy when it comes to meeting new people in real life, let alone flirting with them. On the internet, I feel a bit safer, as I'm not talking to them face to face. Can you give me some tips for a safe and fun online experience chatting with people my age?"

Do's:

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Don'ts:

1

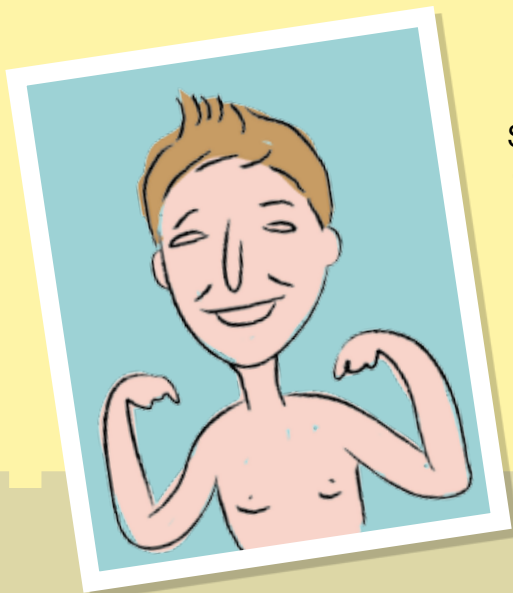
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²⁴ Merriam-Webster (2012), 'Sexting' (online), <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/sexting>, consulted on 20/10/2012.



Sharing a naked picture of yourself or someone else might be quite exciting or fun at some point in time, but the truth of the matter is that you have no way of guaranteeing that this photo will not turn up in the wrong hands. The only way to avoid this is not to send the image. However, even if the photo is not shared any further than with just one person, it could still have legal implications.

➡ Find out if the following actions are illegal. If they are illegal, can you describe why?

Ben (aged 14) has taken a naked image of himself and has sent it to his girlfriend (also 14).

I have sent a mail with some sexy talk to my boyfriend. He was a bit down, so I thought I might cheer him up.

My girlfriend (15) has sent me a picture of herself topless. I have not shared it with anybody; I wouldn't do that to her, I'll just keep it safe on my computer.

A friend of mine posted online a movie of one of his classmates (18) in the shower. It was taken down immediately by the social networking site, but the harm was done, everybody has seen it.