

# PROTECTING YOURSELF ONLINE

A guide to  
Social Media  
and the  
information  
you share.

# YOUR DIGITAL REPUTATION

The things you put online can stay there forever and might be the first thing people notice about you. A bit like a digital reputation?

With every new profile, tweet or photo you post online, imagine you're adding to a digital reputation. We've all got one and people that know you, and people who don't, can see it and learn a lot from it. What does yours say about you?

Our digital reputation can show us at our very best or very worst. Remember, whatever you've put out there, it's never too late to take control of your online reputation.

# 5 STEPS TO SAFER SHARING

Sharing what you're up to and things you've done with your friends is part of the fun of the internet so make sure you know how to do it safely.

1

## **Mind your privacy**

Most websites, apps and social networks you can share information on have 'privacy settings'. These help you control what you share and who you share it with. So, if you decide your friends, friends of friends or everyone can see this photo or comment, it's your choice.

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## **Choose your friends wisely.**

It's always best to only share with friends you know in the real world. Remember too that what your friends share about you and their privacy settings online will also affect you.

# 5 STEPS TO SAFER SHARING

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## **Remove and report**

Think you shouldn't have made that comment? Make sure you know how to remove anything you regret posting from any sites you use. If someone's posted something about you that you're worried about and refuses to take it down, make sure you know how to report it.

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## **Know what you look like online**

It can be hard to keep up with the things we've done online so it's a good idea to Google yourself now and again, and review your profiles on any social networks you use. That way you'll know what other people find out about you, as well as things others might have posted about you.

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## **Shut down or delete.**

If you stop using a social network remember to shut down your profile or delete your account.

# 5 THINGS TO ASK YOURSELF BEFORE YOU POST

## 1 What do I look like?

If you didn't know you, what would you think about this post? What impression would you have of the person who posted it? Things that we might share with friends as a joke can look very different to someone else, and that might be someone you're trying to impress – a girl, a boy, even an employer or a university recruiter.

## 2 Is this post permanent?

When you share something online, you can lose control of it. Even if you delete a photo or post you can't guarantee that it hasn't been copied or downloaded by someone else.

Think about how many people you're sharing with and whether they'll be responsible with what you share. Don't forget it's easy for other people to copy what you share online, change it and share it without you knowing.

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## **Am I giving away too much?**

The more you share the more people can learn about you. Could they use your posts to bully you or to trick you into sharing something you may not want the world to see?

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## **Would I want this shared about me?**

It's important to think about the impact what you post online might have on others. Do you have your friend's permission to share that funny picture of them? Could that jokey comment you posted hurt someone's feelings?

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## **Does it pass the Billboard Test?**

Before you post something online, think: would you be happy to see it on a billboard where the rest of your school, your parents, your grandparents and neighbours could see it? If not, think twice about sharing online.