Thematic 01: Be Cyber Smart

Share with Care

Protecting yourself and your online reputation

Thematic overview

Activity 1: **When not to share**
Activity 2: **Keeping it private**
Activity 3: **Interland: Mindful Mountain**

Introduction

Parents understand how early digital mistakes can do lasting damage to someone's reputation. But it can be harder to convince pre-teens that a seemingly harmless post today could be misunderstood or viewed by people the post wasn't intended for. Now and in the future.

The activities below use practical examples to teach children how to maintain a positive online reputation by maintaining their privacy and managing their personal information themselves.

Goals for children

✓ **Create and maintain** a positive reputation online.
✓ **Respect** the privacy boundaries of others.
✓ **Understand and manage** your 'digital footprint'.
✓ **Dare** to ask a person you trust to help deal with sticky situations.

Share with Care
Vocabulary

Online privacy: A broad term that usually means the ability to control what information you share about yourself online and who can see and share it.

Digital footprint (or digital presence): Your digital footprint is all the information about you that appears online. This can mean anything from photos, audio, videos, and texts to "likes" and comments you post on friends' profiles. Just as your footsteps leave prints on the ground while you walk, what you post online leaves a trail as well.

Reputation: The ideas, opinions, impressions, or beliefs that other people have about you; something that you can't be totally sure about but that you usually want to be positive or good.

Personal information: Information that identifies a specific person – for example, your name, street address, phone number, Social Security number, email address, etc. – is called personal (or sensitive) info. Really think carefully before sharing this kind of information online.

Oversharing: Sharing too much online – usually this is about sharing too much personal information or just too much about yourself in a certain situation or conversation online.

Settings: This is the area in any digital product, app, website, etc., where you can define or adjust what you share and how your account is handled – including your privacy settings.

Share with Care: Activity 1
When not to share

Compare pretend secrets with your children to start thinking about zones of privacy.

Goals for children

✓ **Understand** what kinds of personal information should be kept private.
✓ **Remember** that everyone deserves to have their privacy decisions respected.
✓ **Identify** other types of personal information that can be found online.

Let's talk

Why does privacy matter?
Your digital footprint is what represents you online. This could mean photos, audio, videos, texts, "likes," and comments you post on friends' profiles. Just like it's important to be a positive presence offline (like at school), it's important to keep it positive online too.

The Internet makes it easy to communicate with family, friends, and people who love the same things that you do. We send messages, share photos, and join conversations on social networks – sometimes without thinking about who else can see them too. A picture or post you think is funny and harmless today could be seen and misunderstood by people you never thought would see it – now or way off in the future. Once something's out there, it's hard to take it back. Remember:

• Like everything else on the Internet, your digital footprint could be seen by people you've never met.
• Once something by or about you is online, it could be there forever. Think of this like you'd think about a permanent marker: The marks it makes can never be erased, even if you realize you meant to write something else.

That's why your privacy matters. You can protect it by sharing only things that you're sure you want to share – in other words, by being careful about what you post and share online. Why else might privacy be important?

It's also good to know when to post nothing at all – not to react to somebody's post, photo, or comment or not to share something that isn't true. Everybody's heard "think before you post," and that's because it's really good advice.

The way to respect your own and other people's privacy is to think about what's okay to post, who might see your post, what effect it could have on you and others, and when not to post anything at all. Some questions for further discussion :

• When is it okay to share a photo or video of someone else?

• Why are secrets so hard to keep?

• Is it ever okay to tell someone else's secret?

• What about if they're someone you care about and they're posting something that makes you feel they're in danger? If you think you should share that secret, should you tell them you're thinking about that before doing anything? Should they know you're worried?

Activity

1. Invent a character around your age: ask your children to draw or write the character's name in the middle of a piece of paper, and around the outside, draw or write 'personal' information about this person.

2. Now look at each piece of 'personal' information and identify whether it's OK to share that information online or not. What effect might sharing have on the character's online reputation?

Takeaway

Secrets are just one type of personal information that we might want to keep private or share only with trusted family or friends. Once you've shared a secret, you're no longer fully in control of where it can go. What other kinds of information should we be careful to protect?

• Your home address and phone number

• Your email

• Your passwords

• Your usernames

• Your schoolwork and other documents you create

Share with Care: Activity 2
Keeping it private

Review one or several of the following scenarios with your children, then discuss what might be the best privacy solution for each one.

Goals for children

✓ **Study** how to see privacy concerns from different people's points of view.
✓ **Understand** how different scenarios call for different levels of privacy.

Let's talk

Privacy scenarios: What should you do?

Scenario 1: A kid you know at school gets bitten by a weird insect that causes an ugly multicolored rash on her stomach. She doesn't want other people to know.
• Do other people have a right to know?
• Should you be the one to tell them?

Scenario 2: Someone writes in their personal journal. Another person copies what they wrote and posts it online.
• Was the other person wrong to post the journal entry?
• How would you feel if someone did this with something you intended to keep private?

Scenario 3: Someone posts, "Have a good vacation," on a friend's social media page.
• Had the friend announced publicly that they were going away? Did they want everybody to know?
• Are there more private ways to communicate this message – such as sending a direct message or text?

Scenario 4: You know a student made a fake social media account impersonating another student in a negative way and includes their personal information.
• Does the student have a right to know?
• Should someone tell a teacher or other trusted adult? How? What could happen if nobody does?
• It's not obvious who made it, but you know who did it. Should you give this information to a trusted adult?

Activity

Review four scenarios with your children and discuss how each one might have a different privacy solution.

Takeaway

Different situations call for different responses online and offline. It's always important to respect other people's privacy choices, even if they aren't the choices you'd make yourself.

Share with Care: Activity 3

Interland: Mindful Mountain

The mountainous town center of Interland is a place where everyone mingles and crosses paths. But you must be very intentional about what you share and with whom. Information travels at the speed of light, and there's an oversharer among the Internauts you know.

Open a web browser on your desktop or mobile device (e.g., tablet), and visit
https://beinternetawesome.withgoogle.com/en_be/interland/mindful-mountain.

Discussion topics

After children have explored Mindful Mountain, these questions will encourage discussion of the game's themes.

- Of all the posts you shared in the game, which type do you think you would share most often in real life? Why?
- Describe a time when you may have accidentally shared something that you shouldn't have.
- Why do you think the character in Mindful Mountain is called an oversharer?
- Describe the oversharer's character and how their actions affect the game.
- Did playing Mindful Mountain change the way you'll think about sharing with others online in the future?
- Name one thing you'll do differently after joining in these thematics and playing the game.
- What is one example of a possible negative consequence from sharing something with the public instead of just your friends?
- What steps can you take if you accidentally share something personal?
  What about if someone accidentally shares something too personal with you?