



How to Leave A Clean Digital Footprint: A Simple Guide



Digital Footprint

A digital footprint is your traceable digital activities and communications found on the Internet or digital devices. The internet makes it extremely easy for anyone to access this information.

There are two main types of digital footprints:

Active digital footprints



An active digital footprint is formed when you intentionally share information about yourself online. This happens through posting on social media platforms, commenting on posts, uploading your pictures or videos, filling in online forms and accepting browser cookies.

Passive digital footprints



A passive digital footprint is formed when information is unbeknowningly collected about you. This happens when websites collect user information like number of visits and IP address, in addition to what you 'like' or follow on social media platforms.





Here is how your information can be made available to others:



Online shopping from e-commerce websites and apps



Subscribing to blogs



Using a mobile banking app



Using social media websites and apps



Sharing posts, pictures, comments, and videos



Reading articles on a news app



Registering for newsletters



Reposting content



Using trackers

Your digital footprint is important

You should always understand and consider your digital footprint whenever you are sharing anything online. Your digital footprint majorly affects your reputation and future opportunities in life. Leaving a positive footprint will work for your advantage as it will refine your offline reputation.

For example, if a potential employer searches for your name, the information that comes up might influence their decision in terms of proceeding with your application.

Anything you post online can be saved, shared, and screenshotted within minutes, by anyone across the world.

Cleaning up your digital footprint

Type your full name into a search engine and take a look at what comes up. This is what others see when they search for your information.

It's crucial that you check that you are aware of the information that exists about you and if you feel like your online reputation isn't what you hoped it would be, you can do something about it. Simply contact the platform and ask for them to remove the content you're unhappy with. You can also set up a Google alert that notifies you if something is shared about you online.

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Leaving a positive digital footprint

The key to having a clean digital footprint is caution and consistency. You can control your online activities to ensure that the information you leave for others is clear of any negative implications.



Limit the information you share

When subscribing to a newsletter, blog, or website, only fill in the necessary fields and avoid providing extra information that is not required.



Avoid oversharing on social media

Avoid sharing personal information like your location, address, plans, phone number, email address, and bank information on your profile or with others.



Think before you post

The type of content you interact with reflects your character. To maintain a positive digital footprint, be mindful of the posts, comments, pictures, and videos you share.



Delete your old accounts

Creating a new account and forgetting about your previous one allows it to exist on the internet without your monitoring. Deleting your unused accounts and subscriptions minimizes your risk of getting hacked.



Check your privacy settings

Privacy settings on social media platforms allow you to control who sees your posts. Make sure that your profile is not public or try to limit the number of people who can see your activity.



Avoid unsafe websites and networks

Make sure you're using a secure website and avoid using public wifi networks as cybercriminals can access your information through unsafe connections. URL should start with https:// not http:// as "s" stands for "secure".



Keep your software updated

Dated software may contain gaps that allow cybercriminals to breach your information. Updating the software on all your devices and installing the latest versions can protect you from the risk of being hacked.



Don't log in with Facebook

When you log in to websites using Facebook, you jeopardize your personal information as the third party website can access it easily.



Report breaches immediately

If your account or device has been hacked, change your passwords immediately and contact the platform or website to report the breach.



Create strong passwords

Your password should be complex enough that it's hard to guess by others. Avoid using obvious passwords like your name or date of birth and try to incorporate letters, symbols, and numbers. Change your passwords periodically and don't use the same password for multiple websites or platforms.



For tools, tips and advice
<https://www.digitalwellbeing.ae>