Unit Overview
Our culture of online sharing holds tremendous promise for young people. They can communicate, collaborate, express themselves, and find support for their interests from ever-growing and far-reaching audiences. But the ease of online disclosure places teens’ reputations at risk. Something that happens in the spur of the moment – a funny picture, a certain post – can resurface years later as part of a teen’s digital footprint. What’s more, because information can be copied, cut, and pasted online, our messages, comments and photos can be taken out of context. The online histories that our kids build may affect their admission to schools and future employment opportunities.

In this unit, students will think critically about how to better harness the positive potential of digital life and avoid its perils. They learn the importance of managing their own privacy and develop strategies for respecting the privacy of others.

Slide 1
• Read the title
• Define Digital Footprint
  • digital footprint: On the Internet a digital footprint is the word used to describe the trail, traces or "footprints" that people leave online. This is information transmitted online, such as forum registration, e-mails and attachments, uploading videos or digital images and any other form of transmission of information — all of which leaves traces of personal information about yourself available to others online.

Slide 2
• Read the objectives
• Ask the students to define: reputation, persist, context, and online tagging
  • reputation: the general impression of a person held by others and the public
  • persist: to continue and endure
  • context: different factors that surround a piece of information that help determine its meaning
  • tag: to add a descriptive word, label, or phase to a photo or video

Slide 3
• Watch the short video
• Ask...Why do you think things posted online tend to persist, even when you prefer they didn’t?
  • Students may say things like...pictures can be saved, copy and pasted, emailed, etc...

Slide 4
• Read the article, “Texas Teen Arrested for Sarcastic Facebook Comment”
• Ask students:
  • Do you think Justin Carter should have been arrested for the comment he made on Facebook? Why, or why not?

http://www.commonsensemedia.org/sites/default/files/9-12-privacy-unitoverview.pdf
(Encourage students to think about the question from different perspectives, such as that of Justin, his friends, school officials, or community members. Remind students that Justin is an adult, and that for the purpose of this exercise, they should be less concerned about judging his behavior than about considering issues of online privacy.)

Slide 5

• Ask students the following questions:
  • How can information you post on the internet affect your future opportunities? (Students should be aware that colleges and businesses look at online profiles of potential applicants.)
  • Have you heard of other cases or situations in which someone has posted information online that has had negative consequences? (High profile cases have made the national news in regards to the sharing of inappropriate or offense information online. Students may have personal stories to share out.)
  • What can you do to filter what you post online? (Students may say they will turn on privacy settings or will not let others tag them in pictures posted.) Would you post that if you knew someone you respected saw it? (Students should think about a person they wouldn’t want to see questionable information about them; this person could be a coach, parent, grandparent, teacher, older sibling, or neighbor and consider how another person might interpret what they want to post.)

Slide 6

• Review the Key to Creating a Positive Online Image