

FACT SHEET 6

E-PRESENCE AND COMMUNICATIONS





ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND RISKS

■ e-Presence and communications provide innovative ways for people to exchange and interact. However wonderful technological tools may be, there are still serious consequences and risks that need to be taken into account, such as:

- ▶ unauthorised access to your e-mail accounts;
- ▶ misunderstandings in your written messages or use of images, emoticons or emojis;
- ▶ e-mail communications are used extensively by criminals engaged in fraud, phishing schemes, scams and other types of online criminal activities;
- ▶ chat rooms should be used responsibly and the theme should be age-appropriate.

■ With respect to unwanted aspects of online communications, classification of negative acts online can include cyberbullying, online harassment, trolling, cyberstalking or even phubbing (the act of snubbing someone while the other person is trying to engage in a conversation and you continue to look at your mobile phone).

■ **To maintain a positive e-presence**, it may be advisable to do the following.

- ▶ Create several e-mail accounts for different purposes, such as signing up to social networks or for purchasing products online. The different accounts are not fraudulent but they can be used to maintain your privacy.
- ▶ Use appropriate “netiquette” and remember that you have an audience. Be considerate with your e-mails, both in the content and volume.
- ▶ Remember that, in general, if you would not say it in public, you should reconsider writing it in an e-mail or online.

■ **To maintain positive communications**, it may be advisable to:

- ▶ remember that even when you are using different platforms or playing games, the exchanges you have with other players are in fact online communications.



IDEAS FOR CLASSROOM WORK

■ **Google search and alerts** – Have students perform a Google search using their name. Once they have seen text regarding themselves, invite them to click on images and scroll through the pages to better understand the extent and quality of their e-presence. And then, finally, invite the students to click on any video links they find to discover their “video e-presence”.

■ Depending on the results, students may be inclined to delete some of the information or consider increasing their positive content.

■ **Social media cleanse** – If your students have social media accounts, ask them to go through their accounts one by one. They should scrutinise the information contained in those accounts: does it provide an accurate picture of the student? Are these the type of data that the students would like future recruiters, employers or

family members to see? If the answer is no, they should be kindly advised to delete the unwanted data.

■ **E-mail addresses** – If students have an e-mail address, invite them to explore the security settings in order to make their accounts more secure and to protect their e-presence. Make sure that the students do not include personally identifiable information in their e-mail address and advise them to consider using a nickname or avatar where possible.

■ **Understanding digital footprints** – Have younger students watch this eight-minute video on digital footprints: www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ro_LIRg8rGg. Ask them to suggest effective ways to reduce their digital footprint.



GOOD PRACTICE/LIVING DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP

■ More and more students are using chat groups as a way to share school assignments and stay in touch with class communications. Teachers may wish to exploit this already familiar form of communication and add an educational element. Some ideas include:

- ▶ real-time discussions on current events
- ▶ tutoring and guidance
- ▶ educational gaming interaction
- ▶ group investigation
- ▶ creation of an online community
- ▶ creation of posters, presentations or diagrams together in real time.

■ Consider that teachers and students have the ability to share beyond the walls of the classroom thanks to digital technology. Brainstorm with students on their favourite tech tools for communication and collaboration. Include ways to bring digital citizenship themes into the brainstorming session.

■ *Through the Wild Web Woods* is an online game from the Council of Europe for teaching children up to the age of 10 or 11 about basic internet safety, responsibility and civic-mindedness in a fun and friendly fairy-tale environment. The game is available in 14 European languages. The game was supported by and created in the spirit of “Building a Europe for and with children”: www.wildwebwoods.org/popup_langSelection.php.

■ The Internet literacy handbook is a guide for teachers, parents and students on getting the most out of the internet, protecting privacy on websites and social networks, and much more: <https://rm.coe.int/internet-literacy-handbook/1680766c85>.

■ The *Digital Citizenship Roadshow* is a project to develop a Europe-wide internet safety and skills programme model, designed to give young people the capacities they need to stay safe online, become positive online citizens and increase their resilience to anti-social behaviour, hate and extremism online. The workshops are delivered by national youth engagement experts and educators from the local partner national organisations, supported by YouTube personalities or ambassadors working in a “host” role.



FURTHER INFORMATION

■ The Council of Europe has materials relevant to this fact sheet in the Internet literacy handbook; please see ILH [Fact sheet 2](#), “Online presence and the cloud”; [Fact sheet 3](#), “Web 2.0, 3.0 and more”; [Fact sheet 4](#), “Blogs and vlogs”; [Fact sheet 5](#), “Internet on the go”; [Fact sheet 7](#), “Chat and messaging media”; [Fact sheet 8](#), “Social networking and social sharing”; [Fact sheet 23](#), “Internet of things”; and [Fact sheet 26](#), “Are you the product? Big data, data mining and privacy”.

■ The European Commission provides a comprehensive glossary on digital presence and communication, and an overview of relevant groups in Europe: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cros/>.

■ Turkle S. (2015), *Reclaiming Conversation: The Power of Talk in a Digital Age*, Penguin Press, New York.

■ boyd d. (2014), *It's Complicated: The Social Lives of Networked Teens*, Yale University Press, New Haven.

■ Project tomorrow (<http://blog.tomorrow.org/>) is a blog with the following message: “Preparing today’s students to be tomorrow’s innovators, leaders and engaged citizens”.

■ Write the world (<https://writetheworld.com>) is a global community for young students to share their writings with the world and discover what it is to be human by exploring the humanity of others.

■ Touchable Earth (www.touchableearth.org) is an app to teach pre-teens about the world and citizenship. “Touchable Earth is the first app where kids teach kids about the world. Taught entirely by school age children in short videos, Touchable Earth promotes tolerance for gender, culture, and identity”.