

# Facilitator Guide:

## Overview

## Learning Outcomes

By the end of this module, learners should be able to:

- compare and contrast their digital footprint using a variety of tools and approaches
- formulate a strategy for managing their digital footprint

## Topics & Subtopics

- Social media and self/selves
- Digital professionalism as a learner
- Learner as brand
- Creating digital doppelgangers for learning
- Persistence of -isms: marginalized identities online

## Teaching and Learning Activities

(Online but may be easily adapted to face to face)

### **Content Delivery:**

Learners view:

Digital Identities Video

Digital Professionalism Video

TED - "[Who's Creating Your Digital Dossier?](#)"

Learners read:

Communities, Communication and Online Identities, Mikko Jakala and Eleni Berki (Library persistent link - McMaster only)

Alex Couros article "[\(Digital\) Identity in a World that No Longer Forgets](#)"

Audrey Watters, "[Men Explain Technology to Me](#)"

New York Times Magazine, "[How One Stupid Tweet Blew Up Justine Sacco's Life](#)"

### **Activities & Assessments:**

## **Unit 4: Digital Footprint Assignment**

## Self-Search Activity

### Description

Through online interactions, we create detailed digital profiles of ourselves. The information these profiles convey may be positive or negative, accurate or inaccurate, etc. However they are produced, these profiles comprise our digital identities - that is, how others perceive us when they view our information online. This assignment asks you to systematically examine your own digital identity, and to reflect on your findings.

### Instructions

1. In this assignment, you will be conducting a self-search on the Internet. Although you may have already tried Googling your own name, this activity will encourage you to examine your online identity more rigorously. Using three different search engines and Boolean (or equivalent) operators, you will be focusing your results through four different search entries.
2. First reflect on what your **Presumed Digital Identity** will be, in other words, predict what the self-search will uncover. Consider what the top “hits” will look like (i.e. which activities or characteristics will be attributed to you in a general search of your own name) - record your predictions, as you will comment on them in the final section of the assignment. List what you believe your first batch results will be, what characteristics they might include, and why they might be present.
3. Select three different search engines. These could include (but are not limited to) Google, Duck Duck Go, Bing, Dogpile, Yandex, IxQuick or Yahoo.
4. In your first search, enter your first and last name into each search engine and examine the first 30 results of each search engine. Of each of those sets of 30 results, record the number of results that actually pertain to you (exclude “misleading” results that are for people, places, companies, etc. with the same name as you). Record these numbers in the first row of a table similar to the one below:

|                       | <b>Search Engine 1</b> | <b>Search Engine 2</b> | <b>Search Engine 3</b> |
|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Search entry 1</b> |                        |                        |                        |
| <b>Search entry 2</b> |                        |                        |                        |
| <b>Search entry 3</b> |                        |                        |                        |
| <b>Search entry 4</b> |                        |                        |                        |

5. Take note of the misleading results. Is there a common theme among them? Do several results pertain to a particular person who isn't you? Consider which characteristics of these results you could filter out in order to conduct a search that contains more results that are actually relevant to your online identity. Also consider characteristics that could be attached to your original search input to improve results.

6. In your second search, modify your self-search such that the background noise (i.e. misleading results) of your first search are reduced. Use Boolean operators like "OR", "NOT", and quotation marks to focus your query. Conduct the same analysis as in your first search (count the number of relevant results in the first 30 results for each search engine, and input these numbers into your table). Be sure to record your exact search entry in the far right column, complete with the operators you used. **Note:** Many search engines, including Google, use operators that are different in symbol (although identical in function) compared to standard Boolean operators. You are responsible for finding the correct operators to use for the search engines you've chosen, although you will not need to record the engine-unique operators you use.

7. Be sure to enter your search entries into the final table using standard Boolean operators, regardless of differences between search engines. For example, if you used << "Firstname Lastname"-TopicX >> in your Google search, enter this as << "Firstname Lastname" NOT TopicX >> into your table.

8. Repeat the above process for two more searches. Try to refine your entry with each search. After your four searches across the three search engines you've chosen, your table might look something like this:

|  | Google | Bing | Yahoo |
|--|--------|------|-------|
| Firstname Lastname                           | 6      | 5    | 5     |
| "Firstname Lastname"                         | 14     | 15   | 14    |
| "Firstname Lastname" AND McMaster University | 20     | 19   | 21    |
| "Firstname Lastname" NOT TopicX              | 19     | 18   | 19    |

9. In the final part of this assignment, consider the following questions: How did the results of your self-search compare with your predicted results (did anything surprise you)? How did different operators improve or hinder your search? Which search engines/operator combinations were most effective, and why do you think this was? If someone (such as a potential employer) were to search your name, would they develop a positive or negative impression of you (consider how irrelevant results might mislead them)? Of the relevant search results, how would you change them if you could? How could you go about changing them?

To prepare this, you have the following options:

- A collage. This could involve a collection of images, screenshots, text, that describes your reaction
- A slide presentation that would consist of a slide per question. This slide could also contain images and text.
- A written reflection of about 300 - 400 words.
- Another digital format - as you may have learned by now, we're flexible. Video, audio...whatever format you feel would best express what you learned by doing this assignment.

## Additional Resources

Brett Gaylor, NFB Documentary, "[Do Not Track](#)"

Dorothy Kim, "[The Ethics of Digital Bodies](#)"

## References

## Appendices