



Handout 3b: Article on Digital Footprints and Photo Sharing (Lexile 900)

Have you or your parents ever posted a photo to social media? Taking cute and funny pictures isn't new. However, the digital world changes how photos are shared. Did you know when you post a photo other people know where you are? And that can be a problem because most children have some kind of digital footprint.

According to Common Sense Media, a digital footprint is a record of everything you do online. You leave a trail of footprints when you use social media, surf websites, answer quizzes, or sign into apps and games. In fact, your digital footprint may have started before you even posted anything! A recent survey found that over 90% of parents have posted about children by the time they were two! Parents enjoy sharing cute photos of your young life. This can be a problem for you when the photos are embarrassing. But that isn't the only problem.

Did you know that when you post images on social media, you give companies permission to use your photos? For example, when you join photo-sharing apps, you give permission to share and use your content. The only solution is to read the policy of social media accounts before you post. Do you want people to be able to use your photos?

A bigger problem can happen due to geotagging. What is geotagging? Common Sense Media defines geotagging as a feature that allows you to add locations to uploaded content. For example, when you take a photo at a baseball game, the photo can be geotagged to share your location. Most smartphones are equipped with location-based services. Geotagging automatically is attached to photos taken by smartphone cameras.

Geotagging can impact your digital footprint by leaving a real-world location trail. For example, what would happen if Little Red Riding Hood posted selfies with geotags to her social media account? So what can you do if you don't want someone to know your location? You can search online to find out how to disable geotagging on your smartphone.



You can also teach your parents and guardians. Remember, posting photos creates a digital footprint. For example, what would happen if Little Red Riding Hood posted selfies? Those photos would include a geotag with location and time. This could alert the wolf to where Little Red Riding Hood was going!

Photos can affect your digital footprint. However, there are ways you can protect your privacy. Don't post to social media unless you know how they can use your images. Ask friends and family for permission before they post images of you. Finally, make sure that you disable geotagging when you don't want to share your location with strangers. Remember, digital footprints can become real footprints when someone can track your location through geotagging.

Sources:

Visualizations to Teach about Mobile Online Privacy:

http://mediasmarts.ca/sites/mediasmarts/files/games/secure-comics/publications/PT2014_PosterAbstract.pdf

Young Children and Digital Footprints

<https://www.common sense media.org/file/case-family-tip-sheet-2/download>

"Is It Safe to Post Pictures of My Kid Online?" <https://www.common sense media.org/privacy-and-internet-safety/is-it-safe-to-post-pictures-of-my-kid-online>