



Footprints

- Every child – indeed, every person who's exploring digital media – needs to understand that they're leaving digital footprints wherever they go on the Internet.
- Everything is searchable, and anonymity is a myth. If people aren't cautious, digital footprints can be damaging to their future reputations.
- While kids and adults may be equally guilty of making poor choices about how they leave a digital footprint, only kids have an excuse – the part of their brain that understands long-term consequences isn't fully formed until they're in their 20s.
- What's important for kids and parents to understand is that this really is a profoundly new playground. The kids haven't changed:
 - They're still exploring who they are
 - They're still being mean to each other
 - They're still searching for connections and validation
 - They're still experimenting with risky behavior.
- What *has* changed is the fact that there could very well be a permanent record of all of this exploration, one with implications that kids can't predict or control.
- This doesn't mean that we should be fearful of new media or limit its use entirely. There are a lot of great things to be gained from interacting with media. Let's look at some of those opportunities now.

Source: Common Sense Media: www.common sense media.org.