Developing Digital Identities
The Commonwealth Digital Education Leadership Training in Action (C-DELTA) is a programme designed to promote digital education environment in Commonwealth nations. It will engage with governments, educational institutions, teachers, and civil society organisations to assess digital education competencies and provide training opportunities for teachers and students to help them build digital education skills for lifelong learning. It will develop leaders who can demonstrate how to use ICTs effectively and influence others around them to use digital technology appropriately and effectively for learning (and earning) and support sustainable development.

This module is has been developed by the University of Cape Town (UCT) with support from the Commonwealth of Learning (COL). COL is an intergovernmental organisation created by Commonwealth Heads of Government to promote the development and sharing of open learning and distance education knowledge, resources and technologies. UCT is South Africa’s oldest university, and is one of Africa’s leading teaching and research institutions.

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Published by:
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About the Digital Education Leadership Curriculum

The Commonwealth Digital Education Leadership Training in Action (C-DELTA) project is a programme of the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) that intends to promote digital education in the Commonwealth nations. In order to develop Digital Education Leaders (DEL), these modules have been produced by the Centre for Innovation in Learning and Teaching (CILT) at the University of Cape Town (UCT) in collaboration with COL. The Conceptual framework underpinning these modules has been published - see http://oasis.col.org/handle/11599/2442. However some aspects from the Concept Document are foregrounded here to assist you in understanding how the modules are planned and work together.

A curriculum for digital education leadership requires two components: digital education and leadership in digital education, with digital literacies as the basis for both. The two components for the curriculum framework have been developed on the assumption that before an individual becomes a digital education leader, that individual must first demonstrate capability in the practices identified with digital education. In other words, the assumption is that a leader should be able to walk their talk and can only lead if they have the necessary knowledge in the “stuff” to be led. Hence, two linked frameworks have been developed: one addressing digital education and one addressing leadership in digital education.

Overview
The module overview gives you a general introduction to the module. We strongly recommend that you read the overview carefully before starting your study.

Is modules of C-DELTA suitable for me?
Digital education leadership is more than a set of digital abilities or skills; it is a method and set of processes for doing and thinking about digital education. In these modules we seek to develop you as a Digital education leader through fostering your digital literacy, in order to develop your influence of others through your creative pursuits and innovations in the effective use of ICT for teaching and learning. This view goes beyond skills and competencies, although digital education leaders need to be fluent in the use of ICT for learning and teaching. As a digital education leader, you must be able to translate literacy to leadership through questioning the status quo, providing direction and exercising influence.

We assume that leadership is an attribute of an individual and is not related to any position or roles they may have. Digital education leadership, from this perspective, will involve different players at different levels. However this initiative envisages primarily three sets of learners: students, teachers and policy makers.

The modules all contain a number of multiple choice questions (MCQs) that will give you a sense of what concepts you are familiar with and which are new to you. Depending on your prior knowledge you may choose to use these MCQs to construct a personal learning path through the curriculum. However given that the activities within the modules are aimed at helping you develop capabilities and skills in digital education leadership we recommend that
even if you are familiar with the content, that you engage in the activities.

The depth and the way you engage with the curriculum is likely to differ depending on your context and prior experience. We anticipate that these modules may be suitable for individuals to undertake as a self-study resource.

In addition, Governments, educational institutions and civil society organisations across Commonwealth countries and beyond may also like to use the framework, curriculum, courses and assessment tool developed in this project for workshops and group training. As the resources are published under a Creative Commons license, you are free to adapt them for your contexts under the license agreement. Many of the activities can be adapted to be done in a group and by working through the MCQs. It is also possible (at an organisational level) for the curriculum to be contextualised and customised for a group process.

How Part 1 is structured

Digital education has been defined here as the process of fostering people’s ability to live, learn and work in an evolving digitally mediated society by (i) developing digital identities, (ii) mobilising resources and (iii) engaging with networks.

Part 1 (Modules 1-3) of the curriculum are structured around these three interrelated themes.

Developing digital identities refers to working with the digital tools and networks to which you have access in your contexts in order to enable you to create and manage your own online presences and footprints, and to exercise control over your expression of this digital identity (or identities). By implication, this involves negotiating pathways within contexts.

Mobilising resources refers to the processes of finding out which resources are available to you in your context, which skills you need in order to acquire the necessary capabilities to draw on these resources, the development of understanding of how these resources are used in practice in your particular contexts, and the development of capabilities to evaluate, combine and create new resources.

Engaging with networks refers to interacting with networks in a manner that is meaningful and purposeful. This entails constructively sharing information, knowledge and resources. In the online space, this can entail building on your understanding of the social media ecosystem to enable choices regarding where and how you can create online profiles, interact with people across different networks and build of personal learning networks.

How Part 2 is structured

Part 2 of the curriculum comprises modules 4-7. It focuses on developing you as a Digital Education leader in order to work together with individuals, institutions, communities and networks to foster people’s ability to live, learn and work in an evolving digitally mediated society by:

1. enhancing access — i.e., environmental considerations;
2. making informed decisions appropriate to context — i.e., to choose from options in a given context and implement digital education;
3. developing capacity in individuals, curricula and organisations — i.e., operational dimensions; and
4. cultivating innovation — i.e. to reflect being a leader, foster collaboration and networks to accelerate innovation.

**The module content**

Each dimension comprises:
- An introduction to the unit content.
- Unit outcomes
- New terminology.
- Core content of the unit
- A variety of learning activities
- A unit summary.
- MCQ assessments, as applicable

**Resources**

For those interested in learning more on this subject, we provide you with a list of additional resources throughout the modules these are usually online resources with further links to a range of multimodal resources. We are cognisant of different contexts and the variation in access to the internet and so have tried to provide a range of resources. The curriculum aims to acknowledge histories, bodies of knowledge and thought leaders from a range of Commonwealth countries and is designed to be sensitive to participants’ contexts and experiences. However we are few people and would welcome your suggestions and input in terms of resources and examples. The curriculum is CC BY-SA which enables you to adapt and modify the content and we hope that if you do so you will contribute your suggestions back to us.

**Your comments**

After completing these modules we would appreciate it if you would take a few moments to give us your feedback on any aspect of this module. Your feedback might include comments on:
- content and structure.
- reading materials and resources (including videos).
- activities.
- assessments.
- duration.

Your constructive feedback will help us to improve and enhance this module.

**Study skills**

As an adult learner your approach to learning will be different to that from your school days: you will choose what you want to study, you will have professional and/or personal motivation for doing so and you will most likely be fitting your study activities around other professional or domestic responsibilities. Essentially you will be taking control of your learning environment. As a consequence, you will need to consider performance issues related to time management, goal setting, stress management, etc. Perhaps you will also need to reacquaint
yourself in areas such as essay planning, coping with exams and using the web as a learning resource. Your most significant considerations will be time and space i.e. the time you dedicate to your learning and the environment in which you engage in that learning. We recommend that you take time now—before starting your self-study—to familiarize yourself with these issues. There are a number of excellent resources on the web.

**Timeframe**

As described above, as an adult learner, you will make choices about how deeply you want to engage with the module. This will depend on your prior experiences and context. The modules range between 30 and 60 pages and include 3-6 activities which require further exploration, reflection, engagement and exploration from you. We estimate if you engage fully with the modules it will take you 16-20 hours.

**Assessments**

Each module also has a number of multiple choice quizzes. This will give you a sense of how well you have understood the concepts and content contained in each module. However it won’t give you the experience and skills you need in order to become a Digital Education Leader. The activities provided in the modules are for self-directed learning and development. Through engaging in these activities you will develop your own digital practices which will provide the basis for your development as a Digital Education Leader.

**Margin icons**

While working through these modules you will notice the frequent use of margin icons. These icons serve to “signpost” a particular piece of text, a new task or change in activity. A complete icon set is shown below. We suggest that you familiarize yourself with the icons and their meaning before starting your study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Terminology</th>
<th>Summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Acknowledgements**

We wish to thank those below for their contribution to development of the learning material for C-DELTA:

- Sanjaya Mishra from Commonwealth of Learning for his vision and leadership of the C-DELTA project. The University of Cape Town Project team: Cheryl Brown, Thomas King, and Kershan Pancham.
- Our content developers who worked collaboratively not only to write their individual modules but to maximise consistency across modules: Sandhya Gunness, Lou McGill, Liana Meadon, Derek Moore, and Rubina Rampersad.
- We are also indebted to the following experts and peer-reviewers for their valuable comments and insights: Elizabeth Childs, Sieraaj Francis, Aditi Hunma, Shironica Karunanayaka, Maletsabisa Tšabi Molapo, Paul Prinsloo, Rozhan Idrus, Yasira Waqar, Kathy Watters.
- Laura Czerniewicz and Roger Brown, for their keen eye and attention to detail in editing, copy editing and formatting these resources.
Introduction to module

As digital technology becomes more common, affordable, and portable, more and more people from all parts of society are starting to increase their online and digital participation. Many newcomers to the online world may not know the full range of activities available online, or be bewildered by new and confusing communication platforms and conventions.

Understanding the new affordances, rules and potential pitfalls of the digital world doesn’t necessarily come automatically with long-term use. Not everyone using digital technology knows how to use the range of available tools to their best extent, and even experienced digital technology users can fall prey to hackers, lose control of how they are represented online, or otherwise fail to maintain their digital identities in an optimal manner. As such, there is a need for digital education leaders who can help improve, enhance or professionalise the ways in which their students, peers or family members use digital technology.

The following seven modules each focus on different aspects of online engagement, from a range of different perspectives. This module focuses on developing your digital identity or digital identities – the picture(s) of yourself that you create for the online world. It aims to help build your awareness and competencies of all the factors you’ll need to consider in conceptualising and creating your digital identity, alongside some of the tools and techniques to do so and examples of how others navigate this process. This will include topics such as access and equity, legal factors pertaining to online interactions, and how to stay safe online.
Unit 1: Being digital

Introduction

You may already use technologies and digital tools in different aspects of your life. You might use mobile technologies, like a phone or tablet, to download materials or information from the internet or you may use them to communicate with friends and family. You may use information and communication technologies (ICT) mainly for work or for learning, or you might use it primarily for entertainment. In reality, people often use different technologies and tools for a mixture of purposes.

Technologies can impact on our lives in many ways. They can have positive effects by enabling us to do things we could not do before or by making our lives easier. But they can also cause negative feelings, such as anxiety, or encourage unacceptable behaviours such as online bullying.

In this module we will focus on what it means to be digital and how you can use technologies and tools to develop your own digital identity.

Upon completion of this unit you will be able to:

- Understand the concept of ‘being digital’ and some of the ways that different information and communication technologies (ICT) can impact on your life.
- Demonstrate an awareness of the affordances of different technologies and to decide which tools are most appropriate for different activities.
- Use some technologies or tools that you have not tried before.
- Identify the potentials and limitations of different ICT tools and services.

Outcomes

Terminology

Affordances of technologies: What you can do with a technology or tool – relating to its specific functions. E.g. The primary affordance of a phone is to enable communication, although a ‘smartphone’ has other affordances such as connecting to the internet, taking photos, sharing content, etc.

Information and communication technologies (ICT): Technologies used to create, store, manage and convey data electronically.

Technology/ies: The use of practical applications to solve specific problems. Often used as a broad descriptor when referring to a range of tools. E.g. Educational technologies.

Tool: Specific implement used to accomplish a task. E.g. Word
processing software.

Online service: Provision of an online tool for use by different groups of people. May be free (at the point of use) or have a subscription or one-off charge. May be accessible for all or restricted to particular communities, workplaces or groups. E.g. Facebook, Twitter

Digital technology: Any technology that utilises digital data - represented by a sequence of numbers.

Hardware: Physical components of technologies. E.g. phone, laptop, cables

Software: Instructions, written in the form of code or program that perform specific functions in computers. There are a variety of different kinds of code or languages. E.g. Operating software like Windows that manage a computer and other programs. Application software like a word processor or spreadsheet program.

Copyright Licences: A legal statement that identifies what permissions are possible for people using content. Some licences are very restrictive and others (like open or public licences) aim to facilitate use of content

Mobile Apps: Applications or software that is designed to be used on mobile devices

The Cloud: A name to describe the provision of services through the internet. Includes saving content on huge data servers accessible through the internet.

**Participating in a digital world**

Most of us use technologies and tools every day. Not all technologies are digital, but even traditional manual technologies, such as a plough, are now increasingly using computers and other technologies to improve their performance or make them easier to use.

In this module we will focus on ICT. ICT are used to create, store, manage and convey data electronically. They are used in all aspects of modern life - for education, entertainment, industry and commerce. Take a look at this website which shows live counts of internet users,
websites created, posts on different social media sites - it really is incredible to see the numbers increasing at such a rate.

Activity 1.1

Have a look at this timeline which charts the history of the computer from 100BC to 2015: http://www.computinghistory.org.uk/cgi/computing-timeline.pl#

Pick one of the items on this timeline that you think was significant and write down why you selected it.

For example, was it the beginning of interlinked web pages in 1989, or the introduction of the iPhone in 2007?

Resource-constrained alternative: If possible, find a book at a local or institutional library that covers the history of computing.

Teachers: Survey your class to determine which of the items on the timeline do they consider as the most significant. Is there consensus, or does the class select multiple items? If so, organise a debate between the different groups.

Policy-makers: review your national legal infrastructure governing innovation and development in computing and software. Are there significant incompatibilities between the legal infrastructure and national imperatives around digital innovation?

The world has moved on significantly since the early computers took up a whole room and were only operated and understood by a few highly-educated people.

Most people would agree that ICT have now become ubiquitous (or found everywhere), but not all technologies are accessible to everyone. Technologies are, in fact, rarely neutral in terms of how they impact on individuals, groups or wider society, which links to who owns and controls them. The technologies that we have access to are often created, owned and controlled by huge corporations, even if their original conception and implementation was by an individual. We can all think of technologies that have improved our own lives but sometimes these improvements come at a cost to the environment or to other people.

Activity 1.2
Identify three technologies that you think have become ubiquitous and think about the positive changes that each has made to people’s lives. Have any of them had a negative impact?

For example, how is your phone manufactured - what are the conditions for the workers making your phone? How does your use of technology affect others in your immediate family?

Resource-constrained alternative: N/A

*Teachers:* Observe how your students use technology in the classroom (if at all), or create an anonymous survey to discover how your students use technology in their learning. Has the adoption of technology changed how students learn? Alternatively, divide the classroom into groups, each focusing on an aspect of the production/consumption cycle (for example, manufacturing, software/app development, retail, recycling). How have these industries affected your students?

*Policy-makers:* N/A

### Access and equity

To participate in our digital world, individuals need to be able to both access and use the different technologies, tools and services that make this possible. **Look at the following table and think about the impact of not having these basic needs.** We could say that people who cannot access these technologies are excluded or have limited means to participate in a digital world.

**Table 1: Digital access and equity**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic need</th>
<th>Influences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic level of human well-being like being fed, being warm and sheltered, being safe</td>
<td>Poverty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other circumstances outside an individual’s control (war, civil disruption, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic level of literacy and numeracy</td>
<td>Poverty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Access to education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hardware</strong> (the physical components) like a computer, smartphone, tablet or laptop, games console, assistive technology</td>
<td>Cost of purchase to individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Access through work or educational institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Access through charity or public body (library)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reliable and regular source of **power** to operate the hardware – electricity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cost of power source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Country infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other circumstances outside an individual’s control (war, civil disruption, etc.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The **capability** or **capacity** to use the technologies and tools - like skills, physical ability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Access to training and education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support from other people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aids for disabled people, such as tools to help people with physical impairments, and tools for people with learning disabilities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Knowledge** of sources, networks and services that can provide what they need

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Access to training and education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support from other people</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Range of ICT tools and services**

There are so many different tools and services available that it is impossible to list them all. This would also be problematic because new tools emerge every day and some disappear.

It is much more helpful to think about how different technologies can help us achieve the things we want to do. This could be considered from a range of different viewpoints, for example:

- How can ICT help governments provide and manage services?
- How can ICT help my company manage its accounts?
- How can ICT help our community health services?
- How can ICT help a teacher in the classroom?
- How can ICT help me to solve a particular problem?

Let’s consider how technologies can help us as individuals.
Figure 1: Areas where technology can assist individual development

This image shows a selection of different areas in our personal, learning and work lives where ICT can help. It shows the overlap between these different aspects of our lives. We might use the same technologies for these different functions, and often the boundaries between them become blurred.

Activity 1.3

Think about the technologies you currently use for these different aspects of life. Do you use the same technologies for all aspects? Has technology changed the boundaries between these areas in your life?

For example, do you use technology to do work related tasks outside work hours?

Resource-constrained alternative: N/A

Teachers: Do you use technology (such as a forum, email service, WhatsApp group or similar) to engage with your students outside of formal schooling hours? If so, what have been the benefits and costs of doing so?

Policy-makers: given the technological infrastructure available in your context, is there room for increasing the use of technology in learning? If so, are the requisite support structures (such as technical support, ICTs infrastructure,
access to training) sufficiently developed to support additional technological adoption?

We have seen that technology has potential to help you in many areas of your life. Here are a few examples of the ICT that can be used to achieve various needs:

**Personal**
- Finances - financial management software, purchasing online, online banking.
- Holidays - booking travel, taking digital photos, sharing photos online, blogging about travels, offering reviews and recommendations.

**Learning**
- Finding information - search engines, research databases, online directories, encyclopaedias, dictionaries.
- Organising materials - bibliographic software, cloud storage, desktop folders, virtual learning environments.
- Communication - emails, online tutorials, discussion forums, student hangouts, instant messaging, social media.
- Learning materials - online tutorials, videos, podcasts, downloadable content.

**Work**
- Finding work - online CV (curriculum vitae), job searching websites.
- Specific applications that help your work role - spreadsheets, word processors, project management software, databases.
- Communication - virtual team meetings, presentation software, conferences, emails, social media.

At its most basic level ICT enables us to access and engage with a range of resources, from digital content to people (as individuals or communities). Often we will be using ICT to solve a particular problem or make a specific task easier. Sometimes we just use ICT for fun.

The following table offers some different categories of ICT.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Types</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hardware</strong></td>
<td>Physical components of technologies</td>
<td>Desktop devices</td>
<td>computers, printers, scanners, telephones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mobile technologies</td>
<td>smartphone, laptop computer, cameras, recorders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Peripherals</td>
<td>headphones, cables, handsets, microphone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Software</strong></td>
<td>Instructions, written in the form of code or program that perform specific functions in computers. There are a variety of different kinds of code or languages.</td>
<td>Operating systems</td>
<td>Windows, Linux, Mac OS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Applications</td>
<td>Word processing, databases, spreadsheets, games, web browsers, email, virtual learning environments, e-portfolios</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Assistive technologies</td>
<td>speech recognition software, screen reading software</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Services

Provision of an online tool for use by different groups of people. May be free (at the point of use) or have a subscription or one-off charge. May be accessible for all or restricted to particular communities, workplaces or groups.

### Social media

Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, Flickr, Snapchat, Instagram, blogging, email

- **Cloud storage** (saving content on huge data servers accessible through the internet)
  - Dropbox, Google Drive

- **Collaborative tools**
  - Wikis, discussion forums, Yammer, Trello, project management tools, Google Drive

- **Search tools**
  - Google, Bing, Yahoo

## Mobile Apps

Application software and services that runs on mobile devices like smartphones and tablets

- Can cover a wide range of applications like banking, calculator, calendar, clock, local weather, news, games, music, photo editing, etc.
  - Many of the examples of services listed above are available as mobile apps
  - Some are specifically created for mobile devices like the private messaging service WhatsApp

## Affordances of ICT

Some ICT have very specific functions, while others can help us with a range of different needs. You might have come across the term ‘affordances’ of technology.
An affordance is the possibility of an action on an object or environment.


So we could say that ICT affordances are the possible uses that people can make of a specific technology. So a technology may have a primary affordance or may have a range of affordances.

For example, a smart phone has a primary affordance of facilitating communication but also has other affordances like creating content (digital camera), finding and storing information (access to the internet), being personalisable, offers GPS navigation and acts as a calculator.

Just because a technology has certain affordances does not mean that it will be used in that way. The context of the person using the technology can affect how the affordances are perceived.

The following example highlights ways that identifying affordances may not be as obvious or straightforward as we might initially think. If we continue using the example of a smartphone we can see that an individual may view the affordances in a very different way than someone considering the affordances of mobile technologies in general. Considering the use of mobile technologies in a specific context like education highlights different affordances.

![Figure 2: Affordances of ICT](image)

To some extent, focusing on affordances assumes that a technology will be used in the same way by all people. However, while affordances are objective qualities of a particular technology, new users may not be aware of the full range of affordances any specific technology possesses; likewise, users who are beginning to develop their digital literacy may find previously inaccessible affordances as their proficiency develops.
Further readings
Link to published article: http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10639-009-9106-z

**Consume, participate, create**

The majority of people (who have reached the basic levels of needs identified earlier) use ICT to **CONSUME** information and content found online. To do this effectively they need to be able to find the most appropriate content for their specific needs. This might be for entertainment, learning or work. They may also use ICT to store or curate the information they find.

Many people now use ICT to **PARTICIPATE** with others. This may just be connecting with family and friends or could mean collaborating with others in different countries. It might be attending virtual meetings with work colleagues or connecting with communities of people with a similar disability. ICT facilitates sharing of information, supporting others and can be used to mobilise communities to take action.

Some people use ICT to **CREATE**, store and share their own content. This might be in a work capacity where a teacher will create some teaching materials and share them online or in a personal blog where people share their own experiences. People can create and share a wide range of formats such as videos, images, text, graphics, and audio files.
These different activities can be illustrated using online games. If you play a game on your computer you could be described as **CONSUMING** something that has been created by others.

If you play in a multi-player environment, share audio with other players during gameplay or contribute to a game discussion forum then you could be described as **PARTICIPATING**.

If you make videos or walkthroughs of your gameplay, build items in-game, produce and share tutorials, or make content to sell to other gamers you could be described as **CREATING**.

**Activity 1.4**

Have a look at the diagram and try to map which of the three activities you do most in your personal, learning and work lives.

Resource-constrained alternative: N/A

**Teachers**: Complete the exercise above with a focus on your role as an educator, particularly with regard to your relationship with teaching materials. Do you primarily use materials developed elsewhere, or do you communicate with other teachers about how best to use existing materials and discover and share alternatives? Are you a creator of original materials that you could share with others? Reflect on how your pedagogical style influences how your students act as digital consumers, participants or creators. How could you transform your practice to encourage students to engage more in communication around and production of their own digital learning materials?
**Policy-makers**: Review your existing curricula and support systems for digital education. Do teachers have flexibility in sourcing alternatives or developing their own materials to accomplish a particular teaching goal, or are they restricted to a fixed set of materials? Are there activities in the student assignments that allow or encourage them to engage in digital participation and creation?

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**Choosing technologies and tools**

It is easy to become overwhelmed by the number of different technologies and it is even more challenging to keep up with new and emerging technologies you could use.

When you come across a new technology there are often clues about its affordances (or what it does). As we saw earlier, some people have attempted to map different affordances of technologies to create frameworks that might help others choose which technologies to use.

**Finding new technologies**

Quite often we find out about new technologies through other people. This is a good way to find out the affordances of that technology and they may even show you how to use it. This is particularly true in a work context where you may not have any choice about using a technology, and where you may receive formal training or support in using it.

There are a range of different ways that you can find out about new technologies:

- Companies often invest in promotion of new technologies although these may be targeted at a specific market, such as young people.
- News and current affairs broadcasts on television, radio or on the internet may highlight new technologies, such as the widespread take-up of the Pokémon Go game or focus on exciting and controversial issues around technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI).
- Family, friends, peers and colleagues may introduce you to different technologies that they use and enjoy.
- People often share new tools and services on social media and may even provide tutorials or videos showing people how to use them.
- Technology enthusiasts produce regular blogs and websites and act as a signpost for new technology, offering reviews to help people know which is best for their needs.
- Courses may introduce new technologies to support learning.
- Professionals in different areas may provide help and advice through networks and websites to help others in their profession, such as teachers using educational technology or medical professionals sharing health related technologies.
- You can sign up for regular newsletters or alerts that get delivered to your email address for general technology news or for services covering specific kinds of technologies (like digital cameras) or technologies for specific purposes (like project management).
People are more likely to engage with a new tool or service when they trust the people or person that has introduced it. It can, however, be very challenging to know who to trust when finding information on the internet.

Module 2 will focus on finding information in more detail.

**Activity 1.5**

Below are some examples of information about technologies

- [https://techcrunch.com/](https://techcrunch.com/)
- [http://www.zdnet.com](http://www.zdnet.com)
- [http://www.in.technradar.com/](http://www.in.technradar.com/)

Have a look at some of these sites and consider the following:

1. Who owns the sites?
2. Is this likely to affect the way information is presented?
3. Is there any advertising on the site?
4. Is this likely to affect what content is included and how it is presented?
5. Who is the content aimed at?

For example, have a look at the ‘About us’ section of the websites (this might be in the main menu or may be a link at the bottom of the page). Most sites have these and this can help you find out more about the people who are producing this information and may help you identify if there will be any bias or ulterior motive.

*Resource-constrained alternative:* Repeat the exercise above but with a print alternative (such as a computing magazine or the technology section of a magazine or newspaper).

*Teachers:* Students may need help identifying advertising language. Compare and contrast two articles on a new mobile phone, computer or other device, one from the manufacturer and one from a third-party reviewer, focusing on how the two articles use language to construct a narrative around the product.

*Policy-makers:* If your educational institution or system has long-term contracts with service providers, review these contracts based on changes in the educational technology market. Are the hardware and software products currently employed aligned with the forms of technology engagement required by your country’s
curriculum? Are their alternatives - including Free and Open Source Software - that could better address the needs of your teachers and students?

Your technology needs

Some people are interested in keeping up with new technologies in general, or maintain a watch on technologies being used in their work or professional area. However, a lot of us may only look for ICT when we have a specific need or problem to solve.

It can be very challenging if you do not know where to start. One approach would be to use a search engine, but this is likely to result in being overloaded with choices that you may not have the knowledge or confidence to make.

Review websites

You could focus on review websites that sometimes compare different tools or services and identify which situations or needs they are best for. They often highlight hidden costs and identify problems they encountered when using them. Have a look at the following examples:

Reviews of software for students

http://www.savethestudent.org/save-money/free-software-for-students.html

http://lifehacker.com/tag/lifehacker-pack

Reviews of time management software


Like most content on the internet review websites are not neutral. They reflect the (sometimes subconscious) biases of the reviewers, may exist to generate advertising income or to draw people to the website for other purposes. Review services can be very helpful but if you choose to use them try to do so with a critical eye.

Use your own networks

There are probably people you know who have had the same or similar needs or problem that needs solving. It is much easier to trust someone you know than some random person on the internet. You may be lucky enough to be able to talk to someone in your close family or network of friends, or there may be people at work or at a library or educational establishment who can
help.

If you have already established wider networks through social media they can be a great source of help and information, particularly if the network is related to your needs. For example, if you are part of a network of parents they may be able to offer advice on technologies around parenting and childcare. If you are not already a member you may still be able to access information or you can choose to join a network. We will talk in detail about social networking in module 3 of this course.

Make a checklist

When services are free it is still worth making careful choices about which ones to use. For example, there are several **online photo storage and sharing services** available. These are the kinds of choices and decisions that you could consider:

- How easy is it to use?
- Are there any online tutorials, downloadable help or online support offered?
- Are there any hidden costs?
- How much storage space do I get for free?
- How long will they store the photos for?
- Who do I know who uses this service?
- What do the reviews say?
- How easy is it to share with non-users of the service? (i.e. does it allow you to publish through other social media such as Facebook)
- Who owns the content you upload? (this may be in very small print or terms and conditions documents)
- Should I use more than one service?
- Is there any advertising on the site that I am not happy with?

These kinds of questions are important when considering any online service particularly the ones highlighted in bold. Most people do not tend to read the TERMS and CONDITIONS when they sign up for a service but it is useful to do so.

You could adapt this list to make your own checklist and add questions about the specific kind of application that you are considering.

Over time it is likely that you will find sources that you trust.

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**Activity 1.6**

Choose two tools (such as [Lifehacker](https://lifehacker.com)) or services from the [time management review links](https://example.com) provided earlier.

Make a checklist for this kind of tool and use it to compare the two services. Select
one to try based on the answers to the questions.

- Join the service and use it.
- Reflect on how your experience of using the tool or service was true to your checklist answers.

If you are feeling really confident you could also write a review to help other people.

Resource-constrained alternative: N/A

Teachers: Which services proved most popular in your class, and which were least popular? Try and determine what functions of the popular service stood out in terms of usefulness, and how students would go about improving the least-popular service to improve the user experience.

Policy-makers: N/A

Being flexible and adaptable

Technology changes very rapidly and it is important to be able to adapt to these changes. Adopting new technologies (particularly hardware) can be expensive so making changes needs careful consideration. Changing which free services you use may not incur any costs, but can mean that you lose some of your content. For example if you decide to stop using a service like Facebook, then you lose the posts and content you have shared there.

Different groups of people may prefer different tools. So you may feel pressured in using the same services as your family and friends. If all your friends suddenly switch to a new service then you might feel excluded if you did not adopt it as well.

Some people prefer to use different networks or social media for work, learning or personal use. This may mean that you have to manage multiple tools and services and may create different identities in each one. Unit 2 of this module will consider digital identities in more detail.

Support and training

Formal support and training may be available if you are using ICT at work or in an educational institution. In addition to training they may also provide ongoing support for times when people get stuck or have specific problems.

You may have people that you know who can help and support you, such as family or friends. If you do not have this kind of help, you may be able to find help online.

‘How to’ and DIY sources
People are often very helpful online and you can often find an answer to your ICT support needs. These are the kinds of help you can get online:

Table 3: ICT support systems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of help and support</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Technology providers often have help sections on their site where you may be able to download guides or tutorials or even access someone through a chat feature | Microsoft windows support page  
https://support.microsoft.com/  
Twitter help centre  
https://support.twitter.com/ |
| Discussion forums where people post their questions and get answers from people in that network | ICT in practice - international forum for educators  
http://www.ictinpractice.com/a-forum-for-discussion-by-chris-carter/  
http://www.techist.com/forums/ |
| Video tutorials made by professionals and the public                                       | How to make a blog - videos on YouTube  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kNMiOjRf0Sc |
| ‘How to’ blog posts and websites                                                          | How to make a YouTube video  
http://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-YouTube-Video  
Tech tutorials - lifewire  
https://www.lifewire.com/how-to-4102585  
How to make a PowerPoint video  

If you look online for help, remember to check who is providing the service and consider how much you trust the information. Check to see if other people found the information helpful and be very careful about following links in discussion forums. See if others have responded positively to the link or information before clicking on a link.
Benefits and challenges brought by ICT

Activity 1.7

Before you read the next section try to use what we have already talked about to make your own list of benefits and some of the challenges that ICT can bring to individuals.

For example, what are the benefits and challenges for people with disabilities? Some ICT may present challenges for one person and benefits for another.

Resource-constrained alternative: N/A

Teachers: Compile a list of the five most common benefits and challenges expressed by your students, and run an exercise with them in which each of the benefits and challenges is investigated from the prospect of different socio-economic groups (for example, the youth and the elderly, people with visual difficulties and those without, urban and rural). Discuss how the way ICT operates can differ (or remain similar) depending on the context and position of the user.

Policy-makers: Are institutional/national policies sensitive to how ICT’s proposed benefits may differ for the communities mentioned above? Have any consultative processes been undertaken to determine if national or institutional policies resonate with the needs of individuals from a range of backgrounds and profiles?

In the previous activity we focused on benefits and challenges to individuals. It is also important to recognise that there are benefits and challenges of using ICT for different communities, businesses, public service providers, educators, governments and global bodies.

ICT has brought significant benefits to the world and has tremendous potential to improve lives. Governments and organisations can use ICT to improve efficiency, and increase their visibility and accountability. ICT has the potential to increase connectivity in a global sense, enabling sharing of information and collaborative working to solve world problems. It can transform the lives of individuals by reducing isolation, and giving them a voice at local, national and worldwide level. ICT also has huge potential to improve access to education, health information, and career opportunities for individuals.

However, ICT can have negative effects, making some people feel anxious about their capacity to engage with it or use it effectively. It can be used in negative ways by people with malicious intent such as bullying or stealing personal information, or on a larger scale to organise criminal or terrorist groups.
Safety and wellbeing online

It can be challenging to stay safe online and requires organisations and individuals to be aware of the risks and to take appropriate measures to stay safe and maintain wellbeing and protect your digital identity.

Many organisations have produced information and support to help people, particularly young people stay safe online. Some focus on using technology to improve security on your computer or mobile devices, like using software to create a Firewall or protect you from viruses. Some offer simple rules to follow when you are online, such as using strong passwords, thinking before you click on a link, checking to see who is providing the content you are using, not sharing too much personal information, being careful about making friends online and always being aware of your own and others safety.

Activity 1.8

Access the following OER on online safety by the Goodwill Community Foundation. Take note of the online safety advice provided in the resource that you are not currently following. How could you adjust your practice to make sure you behave more safely online?

Resource-constrained alternative: N/A

Teachers: Discuss some of the most common fears or concerns expressed by your students around online safety, and brainstorm some ideas in which they can modify their practice or practice mindfulness online.

Policy-makers: N/A

Being online can have a positive or negative impact on our mental health.

People who may be unable to physically go out and meet people or join in face to face activities can interact with others online and develop strong support networks. ICT can reduce isolation of many kinds, whether that is caused by geography (people living in isolated places), social aspects (such as people in prison or hospital), or people with physical or learning disabilities.

ICT can help communities connect and collaborate to change their lives in practical ways (such as farmers sharing their knowledge through videos http://www.digitalgreen.org/) or by supporting each other (such as this blog designed to inspire, educate, motivate and reassure young mums, helping them know that ‘they are not alone’ in the motherhood journey. http://mummytales.com/)

Unfortunately, ICT also has the potential to have a negative impact on people’s mental and
physical health.

- Activities requiring repetitive movements, which can cause muscle strain or repetitive strain injury (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Repetitive_strain_injury).
- An increase in sedentary working conditions at office desks and home entertainment activities which prevent people from getting enough physical exercise (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sedentary_lifestyle).
- Anxiety as a result of having to use technologies without the appropriate support or training.
- Being adversely affected by bullies or online trolls (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet_troll).
- Online grooming of children and young people with the intention of sexual abuse and of adults for criminal activities and fraud.
- Impact of a lack of boundaries exacerbated by ICT encouraging an ‘always on’ mentality, particularly when work activities clash with home life.
- Being excluded from participating online through a lack of basic needs, infrastructure, access to technologies, training to improve capabilities or knowledge of what is possible.

Many of these negative effects can be effectively countered by the provision of appropriate information, guidance and support. However it may not be clear who should be responsible for providing this. In reality it is the responsibility of individuals, community leaders, professionals, organisations, employers and governments to ensure that we are all safe and well online, and that we are not excluded from participating.

**Behaving well and legally online (Netiquette)**

After considering how other people’s behaviour can affect us online it is also important to consider our own behaviour. We will talk about this later when we consider digital identity and the impact of our behaviour on how people see us online.

Many services or tools that support collaboration and communication publish a set of rules or etiquette that it expects community members to follow. These often include things like respecting other people’s right to express their own opinion, not being rude to others, using appropriate language and contributing in a way that supports others.

Most websites have a link to TERMS and CONDITIONS which might include legal statements about who owns the content on the site and how you can use it in other contexts. Often these conditions relate to respecting a creator’s right to be acknowledged for their work and to
ensure that people do not steal or wrongly use something.

People use licences to highlight how people can use or reuse the content they have created. This can relate to a range of different media including, text, images, video and audio.

Some licences can be very restrictive so if you spot a © symbol and the words **All Rights Reserved** this indicates that the creator or author does not want you to copy or modify the content in any way. Under the terms of the Berne Convention, Copyright is assigned automatically, so if you see no statement or licence then you should assume that you cannot copy or modify the content without the author’s permission\(^1\). Not everyone who publishes content is fully aware of issues around licensing so they may not have thought about how other people use their content. If in doubt it is good practice to always check with the author or creator.

Other licences are more permissive and seek to encourage people to reuse the content. In this instance a creator can use Creative Commons licences ([https://creativecommons.org/licenses/](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/)) or other open licences to indicate exactly how you can use the content.

Different countries have different Copyright legislation so you may need to find out more about this in your own country. We will consider issues of licensing content and Copyright in more detail in sections 2 and 3 of Module 2.

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**Activity 1.9**

Think about how far you are ‘being digital’. You could consider this in relation to your personal, work or learning life (or all three).

Write down three things you could do to become more digital. Rather than identify a specific technology to use, try thinking about something you would like to achieve and then use what you have learnt in this unit to identify what kinds of tools or services can help you achieve your goal.

Other units and modules in course may help you achieve this.

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Resource-constrained alternative: N/A

Teachers: do the activity above but limited to the context of your teaching practice. Is the value of your teaching practice contingent on your students also becoming more digital? What does this imply for students with less access to digital technology?

Policy-makers: if your institution/country is intending to employ more technology in the classroom, contingencies need to be developed for students without devices or with less stable access to technology. Consider how these students could be supported during the transition period and what support networks would need to be established to ensure they are not penalised by their reduced access.

Unit summary

In this unit you learned how using ICT can help in various aspects of your personal, learning and work life and how these sometimes overlap. You also considered some of the emotional aspects of using technologies and the positive and negative impact they can have on your own and others’ well-being in order to construct your digital identity.

You found out about some of the affordances of different tools and services and heard about ways to help you decide which technologies to use for specific needs. You started thinking about some of the benefits to individuals, organisations, businesses, educators, communities and governments and also of some of the challenges.

You looked at some websites and started to think critically about who produced them and how that impacts on the content they offer. You also created a checklist to select and try some new tools and reflected on the usefulness of the checklist.

You were introduced to the concept of online safety (sometimes called e-safety) and considered some of the issues around online behaviour and staying legal.

As a future digital education leader, you can begin to support others in taking advantage of the possibilities offered by ICT to enhance their social, educational and professional lives. Furthermore, you can begin sensitising your community about issues of online safety and critical information awareness.
1. Which of the following groups cannot use ICTs?
   A) Rural farmers
   B) Governments and public agencies
   C) Small businesses
   D) None of the above

2. In an Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) context, hardware refers to ______,
   A) Physical components of technologies
   B) Difficult-to-use programmes
   C) Rare or specialised applications
   D) Tough or resilient computer components

3. In an Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) context, software refers to ______
   A) Code or programmes that perform specific functions
   B) Easily-damaged computer components
   C) Easy-to-use programmes
   D) Basic or simple applications or programmes

4. Which of the following statements best describes the relationship between 'software' and 'mobile apps'?
   A) Mobile apps are services, software is any form of code or programme
   B) Mobile apps are designed for mobile devices (i.e. mobile phones), software is designed for stationary devices (i.e. desktop computers)
   C) Mobile apps are a form of software optimised for mobile devices (e.g. mobile/cellular phones)
   D) Mobile apps are hardware needed to run software optimised for mobile devices

5. Which of the following is a possible side effect of excessive online use?
   A) Emotional stress or depression (e.g. 'fear of missing out')
   B) Increased risk of communicable diseases
   C) Erosion of personal barriers
   D) A & C

6. Which of the following is NOT true about internet review sites?
   A) Review sites may contain unconscious biases
   B) Review sites can identify hidden costs in apparently free services
   C) Review sites can offer interesting alternatives to mainstream
services
D) Review sites exist primarily to sell advertising space

7. The term ‘affordances of ICT’ means:
A) Some technologies are more affordable than others
B) Specific technologies should only be used for the purposes for which they were designed
C) Certain technologies have to be used in specific ways to be useful
D) Some technologies can be used in other ways as well as for their primary purpose

8. Watching a video on YouTube and then writing a comment is an example of:
A) Digital creation only
B) Digital consumption and participation
C) Digital participation only
D) Digital consumption and creation

9. Before signing up for an online service, one should:
A) Check for fees and hidden costs
B) Determine my rights as a user
C) Find reviews of the service to determine its quality
D) All of the above

10. Which of the following are not considered barriers to accessing ICT?
A) Poverty
B) Age
C) National ICT infrastructure
D) Access to education and training

11. Which of the following spaces is not typically used for technical support when online?
A) Forums
B) Newspapers and magazines
C) Wikis
D) FAQs

12. A resource licensed under “All Rights Reserved” allows me to:
A) Download it and view it
B) View and share it
C) Adapt it and view it
D) Adapt it and share it
13. Everything online is legally, by default:
A) Public Domain
B) Openly licensed
C) Free for everyone to use and download
D) Under full copyright

14. Copyright is assigned to a digital object when:
A) It is registered with an intellectual property or copyright office
B) It is uploaded to a formal repository
C) It is created
D) It is marked with the copyright symbol (©)

15. Which of the following is statements is true with regards to the ownership of materials you upload online?
A) The platform will often claim some rights over the content you upload
B) You have full rights over all content you upload
C) The platform has full rights over the content you upload
D) Creators, users and the platform have equal rights over the content you upload

Check Your Responses:
Unit 2: Digital identity

Introduction

As you engage with ICT in your personal, learning and work lives you will inevitably start to leave traces of your activities. These traces might be digital resources that you have shared or published, or evidence of conversations you have had online. Some of these traces might be deliberately left by you, but others may be left by your device/s as you interact with resources and people online. Regardless of whether they were deliberate or not, all these traces, known collectively as your digital footprint, contribute to your digital identity.

It is important to be aware of what traces you leave and to learn how to manage these in a way that makes you feel safe and comfortable online. This Unit is about developing and managing your digital identity/ies.

Upon completion of this unit you will be able to:

- Describe some of the issues around digital identities.
- Understand how your digital identity can impact on your life in the physical world.
- Demonstrate awareness of the costs, responsibilities and ethics of expressing an identity.
- Demonstrate awareness of how digital footprints emerge and the implications of these.
- Articulate the benefits of a positive digital identity.

Terminology

Digital identity: How you present yourself, either personally or professionally online - your online presence - the information that other people can see about you on the internet. It is possible to have more than one digital identity.

Digital footprint: The tracks and traces that an individual makes as they engage with resources and people online. A business, community group or organisation can also have a digital footprint.

Digital storytelling: Used to describe a range of activities and mechanisms to portray information using digital resources, to tell a story (which might be a report, a series of information, an
What is a digital footprint?

A digital footprint is the term used to describe the tracks and traces that an individual makes as they engage with resources and people online. A business, community group or organisation can also have a digital footprint.

Digital footprints include information and data created by yourself, other people and by software that tracks your activities. Not all of the information that makes up our digital footprints can be seen by you or other people. The kinds of activities that leave tracks and add to your digital footprint are shown in the table below:

Table 4: Activities impacting on your digital footprint

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of online activity</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Browsing websites</td>
<td>Websites use cookies (small pieces of data) for a variety of reasons like authentication (when you log in to a service) or to track how users browse through a website. You may have noticed that some websites inform you that they use cookies and provide a link to the kinds of cookies they use. Cookies can gather information like your geographical location, your device’s IP address, the kind of device you are using</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interacting with websites</td>
<td>Buying products online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Registering or signing-up with online services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Logging in to services like Twitter or Facebook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leaving reviews of products or services on websites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Signing online petitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participating on online forums and chat rooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributing or posting on social media</td>
<td>Posting something on a networking site like Twitter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Posting content, like a photograph, on a sharing site like Instagram</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public mentions about you or content about you posted by other people</td>
<td>Family and friends posting photographs that include you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Workplaces including information about you on their website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>News items that include information about you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Some authorities may make information about you available to others online such as the electoral roll</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information about you held in an organisational database (usually not accessible to the public)</th>
<th>Membership of an organisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student information help by educational institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Human resources and financial information help by employers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational activities online</th>
<th>Data held about you by the institution like name, address, courses studied, grades.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Content created during learning activities and assignments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interactions between you, other students, tutors and administrators</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You have control over some elements of your digital footprint and there are steps that can be taken to ensure your privacy and safety online. We will talk about this later in the Unit.

**How long does a digital footprint last?**

A lot of the information in a digital footprint remains for a long time, effectively creating an historical record of people’s activities online. This can be problematic if information included activities that a person would prefer to forget or that could have a negative impact on their personal or professional life.
Activity 2.1

Imagine that you are a detective who needs to use the internet to find information about a suspect. Try using the name of someone you know, such as a friend, tutor or workplace colleague.

Record the sources you use and the clues you find, as if you were making a report for your detective colleagues. Use the clues to find more information and highlight any alternative paths that you could follow. For example, if you find out where someone lives or works this gives you more contextual information to follow up in a search.

This exercise works best when someone already has a significant digital footprint. Try the same exercise using a politician that you know. See if you can find out something you did not already know about them.

*Resource-constrained alternative:* think of the kinds of sources you would access for the above activity in an offline context, such as archives, police reports, etc. Making a list of these spaces can provide insight into which online spaces you should look when you do have access.

*Teachers:* See if you can adapt the following activity with your own students: https://blogs.reading.ac.uk/this-is-me/activities/sleuthin-time/

*Policy-makers:* N/A

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**What is a digital identity?**

In Module 2 on Mobilising digital resources we will consider the concept of digital storytelling. This is where people might create digital resources to tell their own stories, whatever they might be. Your digital identity is closely linked to the digital stories or digital resources that you create or contribute to.

Your digital identity is your online presence - the persona that other people can see and learn about you on the internet. Your digital identity could be described as the story about yourself that you want to present to the world. Looking at it this way implies that you should have control over your digital identity, although other people can affect this as well. In this Module we will ask you to consider your own digital identity, and will provide guidance to help you establish and maintain a positive digital identity.

**Low or high profile?**

You may not feel confident about establishing a highly visible presence on the internet. The
important issue is that you can take steps to maintain privacy if that is what you want to do, or you can take steps to make your presence have more impact.

Some people develop very high profile digital identities and enjoy the attention and recognition that this can bring. Having a strong online presence can be very important for some professions or jobs, such as people involved in marketing, performance or technology. Other people may prefer to maintain a lower digital profile.

Your own digital profile might be mainly evident in a personal context or it could be related to your work or profession. Students are often encouraged to start developing a work related online profile (or an online or electronic portfolio) in anticipation of joining new networks that relate to a future career.

**Multiple digital identities**

Sometimes people might develop and manage multiple digital identities. They may use their real name for a work-related profile to ensure that current and future employers can find them and see how professional they are. At home they may use a completely different name or identity where they can be more playful or radical without risking their professional reputation. For example, they may use a pseudonym to set up different accounts on social networking sites if they want to contribute to political debates and also maintain an account in their real name to present a more professional presence. This approach needs to be done carefully because it may still be possible to link you to an account with a pseudonym (if you use the same email address for example). We will consider this in more detail later in the Unit.

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**Activity 2.2**

Think of the current identities or modes of behaviour you adopt in different situations (for example, how you behave at home or with your family; how you behave with close friends; how you behave at work). Now imagine how you would represent these different identities online. Do you think you could use the same platform (for example, Facebook) for all these different identities? Can you think of features that would be optimised for expressing your professional identity over your personal identity?

**Resource-constrained alternative:** N/A

**Teachers:** Sensitise your class to issues of privacy and the permanency of content and profiles on the internet. Explain to them (or hold a class discussion) about how a platform the majority of the class is familiar with (for example, Facebook) can be used to express a certain message about the user to the world. Consider showing your students a use example of an existing professional network, such as a detailed LinkedIn profile, and comparing its features to more socially-oriented networks.

**Policy-makers:** N/A
**Implications and control of digital identities?**

It seems obvious to say that we would all like to have a positive digital identity but it can be easy, when you first engage with ICT online, to make mistakes that can cause problems later on.

**Why do we need positive digital identities?**

It can be very important to maintain a positive digital presence for work related or professional purposes. Some employers may look online as part of their recruitment process to find out a bit more about the job candidates. Some people create an online Curriculum Vitae (CV) which outlines their qualifications and work related achievements and employment history. This is one way to steer people to more formal information about yourself which may mean they do not have to go searching for information about you. (You can create an online CV on a free website service like [Wordpress.com](http://Wordpress.com) or [Wix.com](http://Wix.com))

Having a positive digital identity is important for everyone because other people may judge you by what they see online. This might actually be problematic as it can cause stress for people to always appear positive and happy if they do not feel that way. Although you can take measures to create and maintain a positive online presence, there are times when this can be very difficult.

Sometimes other people might deliberately try to impact on your online reputation by telling lies or spreading negative information. This is referred to as online bullying or cyberbullying, and can have devastating effects on people, especially young people. There are websites that support people who have experienced online bullying and which offer strategies to deal with and prevent it. For example, [Cyberbullying (UK)](http://Cyberbullying (UK)).

We will consider online bullying again in Module 3 of this course on Engaging with networks.

**What are the implications of negative digital identity/ies?**

When posting comments and information on social media sites it can feel very immediate and may be fun, but some of those posts may be public and could be found by other people in future. It can be useful to take a little time before posting anything to think about the implications for the future. This is true when posting about yourself or about someone else. We all have the potential to affect our own and other peoples’ digital identities.

Several things can have a negative impact on our digital identity/ies:

- Evidence of behaviour that is considered unacceptable within your culture or society.
- Evidence of illegal behaviour or activity.
- Evidence of negative comments about your workplace or colleagues.
- Evidence of attitudes or opinions that may be considered unacceptable.
- Evidence of behaviour that could be thought of as online bullying or trolling (deliberately sowing discord through comments that are intended to provoke, annoy or bait people).
• Not following the etiquette of a site or service.

Some of the choices that you make as you develop your online presence can have long term consequences.

Choosing your email address/es

A good example of this is the email name you select. Email names tend to be with us for a long time so it does pay to think about this before you start signing up with an email service. As you are registering with a service they will ask you to select an email name.

Quite often if you use your own name it will already have been used by someone else. This depends on how common your name is. The service may give you some ideas so if you try to set up an email like Sam Smith@somemailservice.com it may offer you choices like SamSmith7603@somemailservice.com or SSmith867@somemailservice.com

This can be frustrating and mean that you select a name that you are not very happy with, so try to think about this in advance. Email addresses with lots of numbers in can be difficult to remember and may get mistyped more often.

Be very careful about creating funny or memorable email names.

Have a look at the following examples. How could these impact on someone’s digital identity?

• daftlad@somemailservice.com
• pinkfairyqueen@somemailservice.com
• sillysally@somemailservice.com
• alwaysthebridesmaid@somemailservice.com
• mathsgeek3.141@somemailservice.com

If you already have an email address think about what it says about you. Some people choose to have different email accounts for different aspects of their lives. Sometimes you will be given a workplace email address to use for employments purposes. This can help you manage your different digital identities. It is likely that you will lose a workplace email address when you leave the job so to prevent losing personal emails it can be useful to also have a personal email address.

Emails are also significant when you sign up to different online services, because you usually need one to verify that you are a human (and not a robot). Be careful if you are setting up a personal space on a site using a made-up name like pinkfairyqueen and then using a work email. Although most sites do not show your email it will still link those two bits of data in a database somewhere and will be part of your footprint (even if hidden).
Activity 2.3

Take a look at the following case studies and write down some of the solutions or possible actions that these people could take.

Case study one
Samuel went to a party at the weekend. He had a great time and enjoyed dancing and socialising with his friends. Some of his friends took photos on their phones of Samuel dancing with a bottle of beer in his hand. The next day they posted the photos publicly on Facebook and tagged Samuel’s name (linked the photograph to Samuel’s Facebook name). Samuel got an email telling him that he had been tagged by someone so he went to look at the photos. At first he thought they were great and really captured the fun that he had at the party.
Later in the day someone who had been at the party made a comment next to a photo about Samuel being drunk. Several people then contributed to the conversation. His friends were teasing Samuel about being drunk.
How do you think Samuel should deal with this situation? What could he do to stop this impacting on his digital identity?

Case study two
Rehana has been using ICT to support her learning while she studied for a degree. She also uses it to socialise online and has been contributing to chat groups and discussion forums for a few years. She has just completed her studies and achieved a good degree so she is applying for jobs with some high profile companies.
She has heard that one of the companies checks to see what kind of online activities job candidates engage with. Rehana has always behaved well online and followed the guidelines for the sites she uses. She has always been courteous and polite, but she is aware that her attitudes towards some of the things she previously discussed have changed and developed. She is considering going back to delete or tidy up some of her previous contributions.
Do you think Rehana should do this? Do you think it is appropriate for an employer to check job candidates in this way?

Case study three
Abe has been using Twitter to interact with others who are interested in films. They share reviews and have lively discussions about the best and worst films they have seen. He now has over 2000 followers from all over the world and he follows a diverse group of people with some very challenging views. Abe enjoys the discussions and often offers his own comments and contributions.
Abe’s mother has just joined Twitter. She has asked if she can ‘follow’ his Twitter account and if he will follow her. Abe is keen to encourage his mother to get involved in being digital, but he is worried that she might be shocked at some of the things he says and some of the films that he is discussing. He thinks it may affect
his tweets and ‘cramp his style’.
Do you think Abe should give his mother permission to follow him? Should he modify his tweets to ensure that she is not shocked?

Case study four
Serena has just become a teacher at a local college. She has a Facebook account where she shares posts about her life with friends and family and some work colleagues. She has recently had 3 friend requests and is unsure of how to respond. The first request is from one of her students.
The second request is from her boss at work.
The third request is from her ex-partner.
Do you think Serena should accept any of these requests (which means they would be able to see all of her posts, photographs and comments on other people’s posts)? What might be the implications of accepting these requests? If she chose not to accept them how might she deal with this when she sees the person face to face?

Resource-constrained alternative: N/A
Teachers: Read case study 4. Would you accept a friend request from one of your students? Consider how this could influence the student-teacher relationship, either positively or negatively. What other forms of social media engagement could you use as an alternative, focusing more on functions suitable to an academic relationship rather than a personal one?
Policy-makers: N/A

Who controls your digital identity/ies?
As you can see from the case studies in the activity it is not always easy to maintain a positive digital identity. We need to make informed choices about our interactions online and how we present ourselves. Some of the decisions are challenging and may impact on your relationships with other people.

The case studies also highlight the impact that your digital identity can have in the physical world. This is sometimes problematic if you are unable to control some aspects of your digital identity/ies.

Aspects of your digital identity/ies that you can control
Earlier in this unit we looked at some of the online activities that can impact on your digital footprint. Here we will look again at the positive actions that you could take to ensure that your digital identity/ies and digital footprint remain positive. In most cases the words ‘Be careful’ feature strongly.
Browsing websites

Be careful when you browse the internet. Always check a URL before you follow a link to make sure that it looks as you would expect it to.

Web browsers like Google Chrome and Firefox have a menu for browser settings and you will be able to set some rules for how it deals with cookies and you can set up how safe you want your browsing to be.

Websites and services that have tracked your browsing data can ‘deliver’ adverts to you based on personal information. (For example if you were browsing for information about mountain biking you may have noticed that you suddenly start seeing adverts for bikes popping up.)

Some web browsers like Google Chrome and Firefox have plug-ins or add-ons (extra tools) that can prevent your browser giving information to websites.

Both web browsers have a tool to stop adverts (an Ad blocker). They also have an Antisocial tool that stops social media sites passing on data when you log out.

Both have a Ghostary tool which blocks invisible tracking cookies and plug-ins on many websites. You can select which ones to block.

Interacting with websites

Be careful when you register for online services or enter personal data. Sometimes you are asked to include some personal information like a pet name, your first school or your mother’s maiden name. This might be used later to verify that you are the account holder.

This kind of personal information might be easy to find on your social networking sites and could be used by someone trying to impersonate you. One way around this is to make up this information when you register with sites so that it does not match your real personal information. (It is important that you remember what you originally said though).

Another way to prevent this happening is to only share personal information with friends and family (or people you trust). Even so, if you add someone to your network they may be able to see your followers and find out what schools they went to, and they may see you photos of your pet and their name...

Be careful when you create a password because other people could access your accounts and impact on your digital profile (or carry out fraud or other crimes). Do not use something very obvious or easy to guess like your child’s name or your pet’s name. Do not use the same password for all your sites.

The best way to deal with passwords is to use a password manager. Lastpass and Dashlane are examples of free services that manage your passwords for you so that you do not have to remember them, and prevent you from using the same password on multiple sites or services. Usually you download a plug-in for your web browser so that it can help when you need to create or remember a password. When you are signing up or registering for a new service the
password manager creates a strong password for you and stores it. The next time you login it will fill in the username and password for you. This means that you only have to remember one password - the one for the password manager. You can also use the password manager on different devices as the information is not stored on your machine but is held in the cloud (stored on the internet).

**Be careful** about what information is connected with your different identities or services that you use. As we mentioned earlier, if you make comments on a social networking site or on something like a newspaper site under a pseudonym your email is probably connected with that account.

**Be careful** when buying products online. Use reputable sites that you trust. You could use a service like PayPal that allows you to pay in online shops without entering your card details into web forms. It may also offer you some protection if there is a problem with the payment or the goods.

Contributing or posting on social media

**Be careful** when you contribute posts using social media. Think about what you are posting and how this could affect your digital footprint now and in the future? Think about how widely the information goes - is it public or can you limit who you post too. For example a tweet on Twitter is visible to all, although you can delete tweets. On Facebook you can choose who can see your posts. Some services offer private messaging functions so that you can talk to individuals or private groups. Check what levels of privacy settings you can select on the social media sites you use.

Aim to be polite and respectful of other people and make sure you comply with the rules and etiquette of the site.

**Be careful** when you mention someone else or post something about someone else. You can have an impact (either positive or negative) on someone else’s identity. You can provide a testimonial or say something nice about a colleague to enhance their digital profile or you could post a photograph which someone else is unhappy with. It can be good practice to ask someone before posting content that may affect them, to give them a choice.

Public mentions about you or content about you posted by other people

It is very difficult to have control over other people and what they post or say about you. However it is acceptable to challenge people, in a respectful way, if they have posted something you are not happy with. This can be hard to do, particularly it that person is a colleague or someone who has a position of power over you, but it may just be a result of them not thinking about the implications. Other people may not be aware of issues around managing digital identity/ies, and may be happy to take something down if you explain this to them.

Information about you held in an organisational database (usually not accessible to the public)

This is another area where you may have little control over what information is held about you. Your country may have data protection or privacy legislation which aims to protect people’s
rights. You might be able to ask an organisation what information it holds and challenge anything that may be incorrect.

Educational activities online

When you register with an educational institution there will be some terms and conditions that you need to agree to. These usually describe the kinds of information that the institution will hold and why they store this.

Depending on your educational institution, as a student you may own any content that you produce during your learning activities. Sometimes this may involve collaborative activities or conversations with other students that can complicate who owns this information.

One challenge for students is that you may produce information and content that is stored inside closed institutional systems, which you may prefer to be evident to potential employers. Educational institutions often provide opportunities to help students produce online portfolios and can support them to develop positive online identities. For example they may introduce students to online networks that can help make connections in their profession or may provide spaces to start developing a public digital identity.

Who follows who?

Be careful about making friends online because they may have access to the information you share. Some services like Twitter allow you to choose who you follow, or Facebook lets you choose who can see your posts. The mobile app WhatsApp is an instant messaging service that allows you to have private conversations with selected people.

Who you follow can tell someone quite a lot about you and is part of your digital identity, especially if you have conversations with them that other people can see.

Some people choose to use one service to communicate and share with family and friends and a different service for work or professional conversations and sharing. Another option is to have two accounts on a service, one for work and the other for personal interactions, although this can be challenging to manage and you may need to use different email addresses, because many services only allow one account per email address.

How do you feel about your work colleagues seeing some of the posts made by your friends and family? How would you manage this?

Unit summary

In this unit you learned about how many online activities leave traces, forming what is known as your digital footprint, the precursor to your digital identity. You learned of the kinds of activities and services that help create your digital footprint through the kinds of data that they collect about you, and how this can persist for a long period of time. This led to an exploration for the need for a positive digital identity, one that you
create and shape which expresses the version (or versions) of yourself that you would like others to see and engage with online. A number of case studies were explored to illustrate how others navigate issues of digital footprints from their past in light of the way they wish to be perceived in the present, and how this impacts on how they can create or enhance their digital identities going forward.

As many of your colleagues, peers of friends and family may first engage with online spaces through social media, you can help explain the longevity of the digital footprint created by these platforms and the possible long-term consequences of these interactions in their personal and professional lives. This can serve as a catalyst for them engaging more consciously and conscientiously with their online communications, hopefully spurring them to develop and maintain positive digital identities.

**Assessment**

1. Which of the following best describes my digital footprint?
   
   A) All of my deliberate online activities (commenting, creating content, etc.)
   B) All information about me collected by others (cookies, records, etc.)
   C) All records of all my activities and information regarding me online
   D) Usage logs of when I access the internet

2. How long do digital footprints last?
   
   A) One week or less
   B) Until I log off/stop accessing the internet
   C) One month or less
   D) Forever

3. Which of the following statements is correct with regard to the creation of multiple digital identities?
   
   A) It is impossible to create multiple digital identities
   B) Every user is required to create multiple digital identities
   C) It is possible but ill-advised to create multiple digital identities
   D) Multiple digital identities can be difficult to manage
4. Which of the following is more correct with regard to online financial transactions?
   A) Services exist to enhance the security of online transactions
   B) Online transactions are always safe
   C) Online transactions are safer than physical transactions but still carry some risk
   D) Online transactions are never safe

5. What information can browsers/websites collect about your browsing activity?
   A) Frequently-used search terms and keywords, mostly for targeted advertising
   B) Political affiliation or religious views
   C) Browsers/websites don’t collect information about my activity
   D) Socio-economic data (such as age, ethnicity, gender and household wealth)

6. Which of the following services can help you maintain a safe digital identity?
   A) Using Mozilla Firefox instead of Google Chrome or Internet Explorer
   B) Password managers such as Lastpass or Dashlane
   C) Antivirus software such as Norton or McAfee
   D) B and C

7. Which of the following terms refers to small pieces of data used by websites for purposes such as authentication?
   A) Cakes
   B) Cookies
   C) Biscuits
   D) Crackers

8. Which of the following is not a plausible strategy for enhancing your online safety?
   A) Post different sorts of information on different social media sites
   B) Use payment services to avoid sharing your card information online
   C) Don’t use social media at all
   D) Remove all negative content about you posted by other people or
9. Which of the following statements best explains the benefits of maintaining a positive digital identity?
   A) A positive digital identity can help with future employment opportunities
   B) It is not important to maintain a positive digital identity
   C) A negative digital identity can result in professional and legal difficulties in the future
   D) A & C

10. Which of the following online services does not display a public record of some of your communications?
   A) Facebook
   B) WhatsApp
   C) Twitter
   D) LinkedIn

11. The following step is NOT practical to ensure my online safety:
   A) Use different passwords for different online services
   B) Be careful which people I choose to connect with online, including friends and family
   C) Be careful of which content I choose to share or post online
   D) Never sign any terms-of-service agreement

12. Which of the following do you have the least control over in managing your digital footprint?
   A) Information about you stored on private organisational databases
   B) Social media posts made by you about yourself
   C) Social media posts made by others about you
   D) Information about you stored on governmental databases

13. Which of the following is NOT an appropriate strategy for managing your online safety?
   A) Installing browser plugins that prevent or reduce the amount of information your browser gives to external websites
B) Using multiple unique passwords for different online services
C) Falsifying personal information you provide to social networks
D) Strictly controlling which personal information you choose to provide to social networks

Check Your Responses:

Unit 3: Creating digital identity/ies

Introduction

The previous unit described what makes up your digital identity/ies and what can impact on your digital footprint. This Unit will help you think through aspects of your own digital identity/ies and will help you decide which services and tools to use to start one or develop an emerging online profile.

Upon completion of this unit you will be able to:

- Locate what existing digital identity/ies you may already possess.
- Create a new digital identity or shape your existing identities to better represent yourself.
- Evaluate appropriate platforms for the different digital identities you wish to create.
- Discern which tools can be used to create content as part of your digital identity.

Preparing to create an online profile

You have seen in the previous unit how many different aspects of your online activities impact on your digital identity. Although we do not have control over all aspects of this, we can take important measures to create positive identities or to improve our existing identity/ies if we already have one.

There are several steps that can help you through the process, which are based around some key questions.

Do you already have a digital identity?

If you have ever contributed to social networking sites, or posted digital resources like videos or photographs then you will already have a digital identity. If you have then ask yourself the following questions?
● Did I use my real identity or name for these posts or content?
● Am I happy for these to be part of my emerging digital identity?
● Do I need to keep these separate from my professional or work-related identity?
● Has someone else already had an impact on my digital identity?
● Can I remove anything that I am not very happy with?

If you are happy with your emerging or existing digital identity then you simply need to enhance and build on what you have started. If you are not happy try to take steps now to remove any content that you are not happy with.

If there is something connected to your name that you are not happy with and you have no way to delete or change it, then the best thing to do is to work on creating a positive online profile that overshadows the offending content.

**Do you need to create more than one digital identity?**

You may be happy to have a digital identity that brings together different elements of your personal, learning or work life. It requires a certain level of confidence to share personal information with employers, or potential employers, tutors or other students. Some people are happy to share things in the wider world but others may prefer to be more private.

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Introduction

Having understood digital identity, it is important for you to create digital identities. There are different platforms and digital environments to create digital identities. In this unit, we discuss about creating digital identities using different web tools. So, basic access to the web and some digital literacy are essential to work on the web and create your profile.

Upon completion of this unit you will be able to:

- Create your digital identity in multiple platforms.
- Decide which platforms to use.
- Undertake activities to create (follow, share and create content) digital identities.

**Activity 3.1**

Do a quick drawing or mindmap of the different aspects of your digital life. Try to draw in the connections that you are happy to make across these different areas?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Mark on the drawing any digital tools, devices or services that you use for those different areas?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are there any areas that you do not want to connect?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do you use some digital tools, devices or services across these different areas? For example, you may be happy to connect your learning and work-related areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Here is an example of a similar diagram by Alec Courosa an educator which identifies his professional networks:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 4: Personal professional networks by Alec Courosa**

Resource-constrained alternative: N/A

*Teachers*: Your students may only be familiar with a few tools and therefore use them for both personal and professional connections. Consider explaining to them the value of more clearly delineating their professional/educational and private lives, either through the use of additional tools specific to each network, or using other functions of existing tools (i.e. private Facebook groups).

*Policy-makers*: N/A

The decisions that you make during this part of the process is very important because it will affect which tools and services you chose to adopt. It also affects which name you sign-up to (or register) with different services.
Have a look at this case study:

Case study 5

Deveni is a student in his last year at university. He has been using ICT for his studies in librarianship and also uses social media to stay in touch with this family and friends while he is studying away from home. He has used the same name in his Facebook, Instagram and Pinterest accounts where he is known as littledevil. The email address he has used for these accounts uses the same name.

As he prepares to become a librarian his tutor at University has suggested that he starts creating a professional online identity to help him participate in professional networks and to show potential employers.

Deveni decides to keep his littledevil name for his personal networks and to join other networks for his professional life. He creates a new email address using his own name and registers for the following sites with his own name:

- **LinkedIn** - a worldwide professional network which encourages testimonials from peers, allows people to enter their work experience and qualifications, has groups relating to professions and encourages conversations and resource sharing. Once he has joined he begins to make connections with fellow students. He starts to follow conversations between professionals and he also keeps an eye open for jobs that are advertised on the site

- **E-mail discussion lists** - groups that share emails on particular subjects. Deveni joins a few email lists on his areas of specialism- one for law librarians, one which shares library jobs, and one on content licensing. He starts receiving emails from other professionals that discuss very specific issues and share highly relevant resources. He also starts to establish some useful contacts in these groups.

- **Twitter** - a microblogging site where people network and share content and conversations. Deveni plans to use this only for information relating to his profession so he follows a few people who he discovered on LinkedIn and starts by retweeting their messages (sending out other people’s messages to his own followers). In Twitter, retweeting and favouriting messages is a way to start making connections. Each tweet or message can only be 140 characters long but can include links to other content. Deveni plans to use it to broadcast his own blog posts and to engage in conversations.

- **Google+** - also known as GooglePlus is a social networking site that offers networking and content sharing features. Deveni makes some connections and starts sharing links to interesting content he find on the internet. He also joins a few Google hangouts (online meetings) with some of his fellow students and other librarianship students from around the world.

- **Wordpress.com** - a free site where you can set up a website and/or a blog. Deveni decides to set his own website called ‘A librarian in the South Pacific’ where he
will create an online CV (curriculum vitae) and also intends to blog about his experience of being a librarian.

- **About-me** - offers users one page to pull together all of your social networking accounts. Deveni creates a page linking to his professional sites, writes a simple paragraph, adds a photo of himself and links to this page in his email signature (an email signature is text that you can write to be inserted at the bottom of all your emails). He also looks at the about.me pages of other librarians and follows them. Some of them follow him back.

Deveni feels that this is a good approach for him as it allows him to maintain his previous connections and networks with family and friends but also means he can establish a more professional digital identity as he moves forward in his profession.

### Which technologies and networks are best for your needs?

It can be challenging to know which services and technologies are best for your needs. Some networks work well for personal sharing and others suit professional or work-related activities. Module 3 consider different networks in more detail. Some things can help you decide:

- What are other people like you using? It can be useful to see what people you know are using or you may be able to get advice from a tutor (if you are a student) or work colleagues.
- Read the about pages of each service or tool you are considering using - some sites are designed to support professional networking and sharing.
- Look on the internet for reviews of the sites which will describe the features and how they are used.
- Make sure that you can easily access the sites from the device/s you use.
- Trial and error - with technologies this is sometimes a useful approach - you can only really test something out for yourself if you have a go. If you find that you do not like a service or network you can stop using it, although if you leave it live other people may still think you are using it so you may need to keep a watch on it in case someone important uses it to contact you
- Do not just join something because everyone else is using it. Take a reflective approach and think about how a site will impact on your digital identity and support your specific needs.

### Creating an online profile/s

Once you have decided which networks and services to use you need to start creating and building your online profiles.
Sign up with relevant services

It can be fairly straightforward to sign up or register with a service. You usually need to create a username (don’t forget to choose something appropriate), add your email address and create a password.

As soon as you create a new profile on a service you have added an element to your digital identity. By contributing to social networking services you start to build your profile. However, it can be challenging to feel confident enough to make posts or share content. You may feel that you do not have anything to share.

Follow or link to other people

A good starting point is to look at other people on the network that you know or that seem similar to yourself. Depending on the network you may be able to click a button to follow them, make them a friend or contact, or invite them to connect to you.

We highlighted earlier in this Module that WHO you follow and link to is an important part of your digital identity. Choose carefully and consider how this may link to your own digital identity. For example, if the person shares inappropriate content that you find offensive or used language that you do not find acceptable you can later unfriend or unfollow someone. This is particularly relevant if your friend or followers content shows up in your stream.

People can become fixated on having a lot of followers if they see other people with thousands of followers. Remember why you have chosen to use the service or network. You are unlikely to have meaningful interactions with thousands of people and are more likely to see content or comments that you may not be happy with. This is a matter of personal choice but not everyone judges your value by the number of followers or friends you have online.

Share content from other people

Once you have made some connections it can be useful to share content made by other people. This raises your own digital profile and helps to build connections with people. If you share their content they may do the same for you once you are ready to make original posts. Sharing other people’s content is a good way to build your confidence and your network. Choose what you share carefully, bearing in mind that you adhere to the law in terms of what you are legally allowed to share.

Social networking services can be used to in an activist way for people who are passionate about a particular subject. Much of what is shared can have a political aspect for example, sharing content and messages about reducing poverty or climate change. Conversely, it could promote values that you do not feel comfortable with.

Quite often people talk about a ‘social media bubble’ or ‘filter bubble’ where concerns are raised about people only hearing what they want to hear. This raises concerns about people being properly informed of all the facts and hearing different perspectives. Some people choose to only follow people they agree with. Others like to hear alternative views. Watch this video:
http://www.ted.com/talks/eli_pariser_beware_online_filter_bubbles

This video highlights that we do not always control who we are hearing, due to software systems filtering things for you.

What you share affects your digital identity as it shapes how other people see you and can affect what computer algorithms (a sequence of instructions or a set of rules that are followed to complete a task) allow you see in the future.

Create your own content

The most effective way to build your online profile or digital identity is to create your own content. This includes writing original comments or posts about something as well as sharing something that you have created, such as a photograph, video, audio file, presentation or textual content.

It can be scary to do this initially but does get easier with practice and as your confidence builds. You could start small and post a few comments in response to other people. If you have joined networks or groups that reflect your interests it will be easier to add comments and content. For example if you are interested in birdwatching you could join birdwatching groups on Google+ or follow #birdwatching on Twitter. Starting to contribute using your personal interests can help build your confidence and get some practice, but do not forget that it will be a part of your digital identity. People will be able to see that you are interested in birdwatching.

Activity 3.2

1. Choose a social networking site from the following list that you have not used before. Check the about or FAQ (frequently asked questions) pages first to see if it suits your needs.
   Twitter
   Facebook
   Pinterest
   Instagram
   Flickr

2. Register with the site
3. Follow or link to some people and/or groups
4. Share some content posted by someone else
5. Create some original content of your own (This can be a simple post, or comment on someone else’s stream or could be anything you have created)

Resource-constrained alternative: N/A

Teachers: N/A
In this unit you learned about how to create your own digital identity, by mapping those parts of your identity created by others and analysing the internet landscape to identify which in which areas you might like to enhance your profile. Secondly, you began to consider how to create a new identity or strengthen your existing one by engaging with platforms and services, and possibly also began to create your own content.

As many people are unaware that digital identities are co-created with others, and that they may already have nascent identities due to their involvement in schools, businesses or other public enterprises, you can now help them by informing them how digital identities are created and how they can start to take control of their digital identity through active engagement and creation of new content.

Assessment

1. Which of the following processes or groups controls all of what you see online?
   A) Friends and family
   B) Government controls and filters
   C) Private algorithms from service providers
   D) No single entity is responsible for all content filtering

2. Which of the following can be used as a content creation tool?
   A) Google+
   B) Pinterest
   C) Blogger
   D) All of the above

3. Which of the following is most correct with regard to the creation of your digital identity?
   A) I alone create all aspects of my digital identity
   B) Digital identities are co-created by multiple entities
   C) Government agencies and organisations create my digital identity
   D) Private individuals and entities create all of my digital identity
4. The term ‘social media bubble’ refers to:

A) An ideal state where you only see online content that’s relevant to your interests
B) A combination of filters, services and your own browsing preferences that limit what you are exposed to online
C) Services, filters and other systems that limit your online access exclusively to social media platforms
D) None of the above

5. The most effective and sustainable way to build your own digital identity is to:

A) Create your own content such as blog posts, videos, websites, etc.
B) Minimise your online engagement
C) Curate content from existing popular internet users
D) Engage with as many platforms and services as possible

Check Your Responses:

Unit 4: Managing digital identities

Introduction

Once you have started to create a digital identity it is important to maintain a positive online profile and to manage how people see you online. This is known as identity management - ensuring that those digital identities you have created are maintained and updated while adhering to legal and ethical standards. In this unit we’ll discuss identity management in technical terms (using platform features, sharing information across services, protecting yourself and your data) and behavioural terms (staying up to date, being consistent and courteous online, and staying legal in your online activities).

Upon completion of this unit you will be able to:

- Monitor your digital identity.
- Engage with others on the platforms you’ve chosen.
- Maintain a professional digital identity on the appropriate platforms.
- Protect yourself against identity theft.

Outcomes

Terminology

Identity theft: Online identity theft involves the loss of control over elements of your digital identity.

Managing your digital identity/ies

It is important to monitor your digital identity/ies to ensure that they remain positive and have the impact that you intended. If you have more than one digital identity it can be easy to focus on one and lose track of the other. Your digital identity is never static and should be well managed as it grows and develops. We mentioned earlier that it is important to Be Careful and this is true as you maintain and manage your digital identity/ies.

Keep a watch on your identity

Regularly search Google for your name and see what you find. Do this on someone else’s device occasionally so that the results are not influenced by your own browsing habits. If you spot anything that concerns you see if you can do something about it.

Set up a Google Alert with your own name and you will receive emails when new content about you is discovered.
Engage with people on the platforms you have chosen

Sometimes people sign up to services and then do not use them. This can have a negative impact on your digital identity if people look at your profile and see that you have not posted anything or engaged for over a year.

It is important to be selective with the sites you use because having to visit and post on too many sites can be overwhelming and time consuming. Try to keep active on the sites you have chosen and always make sure you reply if someone addresses you directly. This does not have to be immediate (you should be in control of how often you post and how quickly you respond).

If you have signed up for a service and find you are not using it, then this probably indicates that this service is not appropriate for you at this time. You can close your accounts on services that you do not use. Check first to see if you want to save anything that you have posted or shared because there is a chance that you may lose it. You can always sign up with the service again in the future if you change your mind.

It is important to note that even when you delete online content or profiles you may only be removing it from public view. It may actually be stored in an archive or database. Check the terms and conditions of the site if you are not sure. This is one of the reasons it is important to think through the implications before signing up with a service.

Be professional on your work related platforms

Maintain a professional image on work related sites and be careful when adding personal content. Even a few jokes with colleagues online could backfire in the future. Be careful not to complain about your employer, your work duties or colleagues.

Some people use anonymous services to make complaints or talk through issues that they find frustrating. For example, in the UK the Guardian newspaper provides a space for teachers to blog anonymously. This allows teachers to voice their concerns and issues that affect them without jeopardising their professional status or their jobs.

Keep up to date

Keeping up to date is easier if you manage your identity on less platforms. If you want to upload a recent photograph you need to remember to do this on all of your online profiles. This is particularly important if you change your name.

Be consistent

Being consistent is important across platforms although everyone is likely to change their views and opinions as they get older. You may no longer align yourself with views you once held. Remember that your digital identity is your own story and there is a danger that over sanitising it takes away your own history.
Etiquette of different platforms

Rules of engagement

Most social media services have a set of rules for engagement or etiquette. Each site may have slightly different rules but most of these are common and include things like, being polite, not trolling, not using offensive language, and treating other people with respect. Some services will not allow you to post adverts or links to offensive content.

Is it possible to make mistakes when you first participate in a network if you do not know the rules? It is worth checking to see if the site has a page which talks about the rules. There may also be unwritten rules that people in the community are aware of, like which language is acceptable. For example the use of ‘people first’ language has increasingly been used in communities of people with disabilities but some groups prefer identity first language where they prefer the term ‘autistic person’ not ‘person with autism’. This can cause quite heated discussions in some forums. Try to be aware of preferred language and different cultural contexts.

Using platform features

Each platform has different ways to interact with people and share content. They often have ‘like’ buttons which might be a thumbs up symbol or a heart symbol. By clicking on these buttons you tell the author of the content that you like what they shared but also you tell your other contacts in that network what you like. In addition to like buttons there is often a ‘share’ button which allows you to share that content on other social media platforms. Web pages sometimes have a series of buttons to make it easy to share the content.

Some platforms offer private areas or limited access areas where you can join in a group conversation or one to one conversation with an individual. This a good way to protect what you are saying from the public eye.

Privacy and data protection

Online privacy is a subject that is affected by different laws in each country, but is often not covered by legislation that was created in a less digital world. People’s understanding of privacy may be very personal and is related to cultural and social aspects of our lives.

Online privacy relates to information or content held about individuals by services or organisations on the internet. Protecting online privacy requires a consensual agreement between two parties about what information is gathered, what is kept or stored, and how it used. Individuals need to be well informed about such an agreement and understand the risks involved of sharing that information.

In reality few people actually read the terms and conditions documents before they click the ‘I agree’ button. Some services provide detailed information about your data and privacy - see
this example of a data policy page from Facebook.

**Sharing information across services**

A key concern for individuals is how the information stored about them is shared with other services. You may have noticed that when you register with some services they ask if they can share your personal details with other services. By allowing this to happen you grant them the right to give your information for other people to target you with content.

Another example of this is when people share links to quizzes online such as ‘Which star wars character are you?’ or ‘What is your IQ?’ through a social media service like Facebook or Twitter. These may just seem to be fun activities but they often ask to link to your content on the social media site and thereby collect your personal information.

**Identity theft**

Online identity theft involves the loss of control over elements of your digital identity and can be the result of people committing crimes for the purposes of economic gain.

However, it can also damage your digital reputation if someone gains access to your social media accounts or websites and posts content in your name. They may be posting links advertising products or encouraging people to go to particular websites.

Identity theft can occur when someone steals or manages to gather personal information or when they guess or access your passwords. This might happen if you follow a link and are tricked into believing that it is a legitimate site and enter personal data or passwords. People are often led to these sites through ‘spam’ or ‘phishing’ emails.

Identity theft can also occur through theft of database contents held by a service or organisation.

We talked earlier in this module about being careful with strong passwords, and the sharing of personal data. Other measures to keep your data private include always logging off a website before closing your browser, changing passwords regularly, and using two factor identification if a service allows it. (This is where you may have to use a password and also enter a code which is sent to you by text or email.)

If people are able to steal your identity they may be able to access your other accounts (especially if you used the same usernames and passwords) or may be able to access financial services that you use online.

Internationally some governments and organisations are working to improve privacy laws and data protection mechanisms.

This Module has given you some good tips for staying safe and managing your privacy online. For more information you could look at the [OECD website](https://www.oecd.org) (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development).
Staying legal

As well as protecting your own digital identity and safety online it is important to make sure you comply with any legal requirements of a service. These will usually be described in the terms and conditions page and might include things like the following excerpt from the Facebook terms page

1. You will not post unauthorized commercial communications (such as spam) on Facebook.
2. You will not collect users’ content or information, or otherwise access Facebook, using automated means (such as harvesting bots, robots, spiders, or scrapers) without our prior permission.
3. You will not engage in unlawful multi-level marketing, such as a pyramid scheme, on Facebook.
4. You will not upload viruses or other malicious code.
5. You will not solicit login information or access an account belonging to someone else.
6. You will not bully, intimidate, or harass any user.
7. You will not post content that: is hate speech, threatening, or pornographic; incites violence; or contains nudity or graphic or gratuitous violence.
8. You will not develop or operate a third-party application containing alcohol-related, dating or other mature content (including advertisements) without appropriate age-based restrictions.
9. You will not use Facebook to do anything unlawful, misleading, malicious, or discriminatory.
10. You will not do anything that could disable, overburden, or impair the proper working or appearance of Facebook, such as a denial of service attack or interference with page rendering or other Facebook functionality.
11. You will not facilitate or encourage any violations of this Statement or our policies.

Figure 5: Facebook’s Terms of Service page

Activity 4.1

Go to a service that you have registered with and see if you can find any privacy settings.

Make sure that the settings match exactly how you want people to see your posts and content. What information can anyone with a link access, and what is reserved for those you choose to connect with?
Teachers: Select 2-3 popular services and find their terms of service and/or privacy settings. Alert your class to the default settings on these platforms and what those implicate for their privacy.

Policy-makers: N/A

Unit summary

In this unit you learned about how to manage your digital identity - to take the appropriate steps to conform to the norms and rules governing online behaviour, to remain legal in your online activities, and to protect yourself from threats such as identity theft and losing your data,

As newcomers to the internet are particularly at risk for identity theft and fraud, you are now equipped to further your own and others' knowledge of how to keep safe and legal online. This can help you improve your online experience and allow you to engage with the full range of online affordances without fear of harm to yourself or your digital identity.

Assessment

1. Which of the following statements is most true regarding online anonymity?
   A) All content is immediately traceable to a single individual
   B) Services exist for anonymous comments but they can never be assumed to be perfectly untraceable
   C) Private communications (via email) are always untraceable
   D) No communication can be assumed to be totally untraceable

2. Website terms and conditions agreements:
   A) Dictate that all content on a website is owned by the website's creators
   B) Dictate that all content on a website is owned by the content creators
   C) Explain the different rights over the content held by content creators and website owners
   D) Explain how the content will be perceived and understood by the audience
3. The best practical way to protect my digital identity is to:

A) Share passwords only with trusted friends and family  
B) Be discerning over how I engage with online platforms  
C) Force other users to remove any mentions of me they may have created, uploaded or commented on  
D) B & C

4. Online identity theft means:

A) The destruction or erasure of your digital identity  
B) Having your digital identity swapped with a third party  
C) The loss of control over one's digital identity and financial details  
D) The loss of control over how one is perceived online

5. Which of the following steps can you take to protect yourself against online identity theft?

A) Ensuring your spam filters are up-to-date  
B) Being discerning when opening emails from unknown sources  
C) Never sharing passwords with anyone, including services which ask for them  
D) All of the above

6. Which of the following can be used to gather personal information about you?

A) Online quizzes and questionnaires  
B) Website cookies  
C) Terms of service agreements  
D) All of the above

7. How should you engage with online platforms' 'Rules of engagement'?

A) My behaviour on the platform should conform to how I behave in face-to-face encounters  
B) I should avoid online engagement as much as possible  
C) I should copy as closely as possible the ways in which existing users use the platform  
D) I should apply my own interpretation while remaining legal
8. Which of the following is most true with regards to signing up to new social media/communication platforms?

A) I should sign up for as many communication platforms as possible
B) I should use only one or two platforms for all my communication needs
C) It is impossible to cancel an account with a social media platform
D) I should use those services with which I can productively engage

Check Your Responses: