

# Digital Footprints & Photo Sharing



What makes up your digital footprint? Who can access the content you share online? How can you make sure funny pictures aren't taken out of context and used against you?

Social media sites make photo sharing easy, and following friends' photos can be a great way to keep in touch. But sharing can be so easy that photos intended for close friends may be shared online without full consideration of who else might eventually access them. Many of us have been told — or have cautioned others — not to share anything that we wouldn't want aired on national television. But for some people, this is more than just a thought experiment: It becomes a reality. Today's case focuses on photo sharing and digital footprints, raising questions about what you need to know to talk to your child about their online photo sharing and footprints.

## Key Vocabulary

### digital footprint

A digital footprint is a record of everything an individual does online, including the content they upload. Every time you go online, you leave a footprint that can be searched, shared and seen by a large invisible audience. All of your actions online — and all of the content that you share or that others share about you — creates your digital footprint. Online, information can migrate, persist, and resurface years later.

## The Case

Watch the clip from The Ellen DeGeneres Show (“You posted that on Facebook?”). In this segment, Ellen shows embarrassing pictures of her audience members that she found on Facebook.



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SCaKuAdKumA>



## Consider

- In one word, what is your reaction to the clip? What were you feeling while you watched the segment?
- What do you think of Ellen's decision to do this segment on her show? Is it okay? Why or why not?
- What kinds of content would you be embarrassed to have broadcasted in this way (for yourself or for your child)?
- At the end of the clip, Ellen shows embarrassing pictures of Megan. Megan is in the audience with her mom, who doesn't follow Megan on Facebook. How would you feel if you saw learned about something your child did because of what someone else saw on Facebook? Does this seem like a realistic possibility?
- Megan's friend who is also in the picture did not choose to share it and did not even go to the show, yet her embarrassing photo was also shared publicly. How can we manage what pictures other share?
- There are so many platforms for easy photo sharing. Have you ever had a conversation with your child about photo sharing? Are there any grey areas or do you see the question of what to share/not share as a "black and white" issue?
- How can we support kids in a world with new and shifting privacy norms? What role can parents play?

The Ellen DeGeneres Show. "You Posted That on Facebook?" *YouTube* Video, 7:13. September 2, 2014.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SCaKuAdKumA>