WE NEED TO TALK:

ONLINE RESPONSIBILITY: YOU POST IT YOU OWN IT

Your Right to Free Speech:

As Canadians, we enjoy the right to free speech. With this right comes responsibility. In terms of online behavior, oftentimes youth believe that they have anonymity and a certain disassociation from "real life" in the cyber environment. What we, as adults, must continually impress upon our youth is that: If you say it, write it, post it, email it, tweet it, retweet it, YOU OWN IT!

A digital footprint is the collection of all the traces you leave in electronic environments as you use or move through them. Some is content you actively volunteer—like your Facebook profile. All this data can be collected to build a profile of you and your behaviour.

It is important for your children to remember that what they post online has the potential to affect them on many levels. Your children can take some control of the image they create online by:
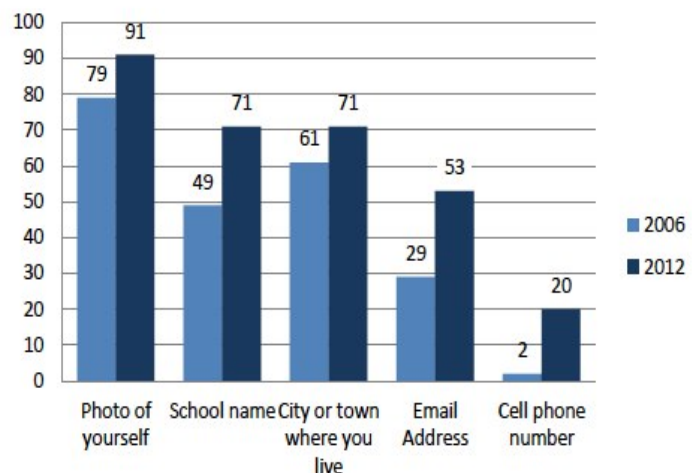
- searching themselves to determine the information that is already out there
- asking for unfavourable information to be taken down by the service provider (which may help limit the dissemination)
- being conscious and considerate of what they post on their "friends'" accounts
- engaging you, as their parents, in their online activity

Tips for managing digital footprint

Share with your children these tips regarding how to protect their online identities and build a positive digital footprint.

- Never post anything that you might find embarrassing later.
- Be careful with the pictures you post on your public profiles. Remember others will see them and judge you based on the content.
- Change the privacy settings on your social networking sites so that only your real friends can see your information.
- Do not disclose your personal address, phone number, passwords, bank card numbers...etc. even in private messages. There is always the possibility of somebody hacking into your account and finding them.
- Do not post things to bully, hurt, blackmail, insult, or afflict any kind of harm on others.
- Always keep in mind that once information has been posted online, it can be almost impossible to remove because of archiving and file sharing. Even though you deactivate your accounts, the information may still be retrieved by others.

Social media profiles: What teens post — 2006 vs. 2012

References: http://www.mediasmarts.ca, http://www.pewinternet.org , http://www.educatorstechnology.com/

WE NEED TO TALK:

Social media rules
– tip sheet

Having a family agreement or set of ground rules for using social networks is a good idea. It's a great way for parents and kids to work together on how to be safe, wise and responsible online. Here are some ideas:

- I will only follow people I know personally.

- I will always show an adult any message or post that makes me feel uncomfortable or threatened.

- I will never share any personal information about myself, such as my age, where I live, and where I go to school.

- I will keep my whereabouts to myself: I will turn off any location settings that tell people exactly where I am or where a photograph was taken.

- I will never publish anything I wouldn't want my parents, teachers, and grandparents to see, because photos can be shared widely, with anyone, in a matter of seconds.

- When creating a password, I will make one up that is hard for someone else to guess but easy for me to remember. I will never reveal it to anyone (except my parents or a trusted adult) - not even my best friend.

- I will always check my privacy settings and go over them with my parents.

- I will practice the golden rule and always treat others as I would like to be treated. I will T.H.I.N.K. before I leave a comment or send a message: is it True, Helpful, Inspiring, Necessary, Kind?

- I will not upload or tag photos of other people without their permission.

Media Smarts
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