

Training fiche

Title	Safe and Smart Online: Managing Your Digital Identity and Interactions
Keywords	Digital Identity, Online Presence, Personal Information, Credentials, Online Profiles, Digital Footprint, Privacy Settings, Online Reputation, Online Behaviour, Proper Language, Tone, Netiquette
Provided by	IDP European Consultant & IHF asbl
Language	English
Training area (X where applicable)	
	Information Literacy
X	Communication & Collaboration
	Safety
	Problem Solving
Objectives / Learning outcomes	
<p>At the end of this module, you will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the concept of digital identity and its key elements • Recognise the importance of managing and protecting your digital identity • Establish and maintain a positive and authentic online presence • Understand the nuances and challenges of digital interactions • Apply strategies for clear, concise and responsible digital communication • Manage and avoid risks connected with not responsible online engagement 	
Description	
<p>As we navigate the digital world, it is crucial to understand how to create and manage our digital identity, and how to interact responsibly with others online.</p> <p>This module encompasses the key themes of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing digital identity • Following online behaviour guidelines <p>Throughout this module, you will acquire the knowledge and skills to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage your online presence • Communicate responsibly • Collaborate effectively in the digital realm 	
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Module: Safe and Smart Online: Managing Your Digital Identity and Interactions

Unit 1: Creating and Securing Your Digital Identity

Section 1.1. Digital Identity: Concepts and Elements

What is a Digital Identity?

A digital identity is commonly understood as a **unique connection between an entity and its online presence** → **one-to-one relationship**

Your digital identity is established through your **online presence** and is developed through **interactions** and thus **activities**.

This concept goes beyond the mere user's one as it delves deeper into the intricacies of individual's digital presence.

While a user represents anyone actually engaging on digital platforms, the **digital identity refers to the specific attributes, profiles and reputation** associated with the aforementioned digital presence.

This one-to-one relationship between an entity and its online presence is a **data-based relationship**.

Indeed, digital identity encompasses **data and information utilised by computer systems** to refer to external entities, such as persons, organisations, applications, devices.

FOCUS ON INDIVIDUALS

Individuals establish their digital identity through the compilation of various data points, resulting in **personally identifiable information (PII)**. These latter include personal details, credentials, and entitlements associated with individuals' online presence and activities.

By comprehending the underlying **principles and elements of digital identity**, individuals can make informed decisions about their digital interactions and take necessary measures to protect their **privacy and security online**.

Let's discover the **elements** that contribute to your digital identity.

Personal Information:

- Name
- Age
- Addresses and numbers (physical and not)
- Biometric data

Credentials:

- Usernames
- Passwords
- Authentication mechanisms
- Security questions

Online Profiles:

- Social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.)
- Professional networking (LinkedIn, etc.)
- Online forums and communities
- Blog or website

Digital Footprint:

- Search history
- Website visit logs
- Online purchases and transactions
- Social media posts, reactions and comments

Privacy Settings:

- Privacy controls on social media
- Who can see your posts and profile information
- Data collection by third-party apps and websites
- Opting out of targeted advertising

Online Reputation:

- Feedback and reviews
- Endorsements and recommendations on network's sites
- Reactions and comments on own posts
- Online presence in news article or blogs

These elements are summarized in **what a person...**

...is:

- Personal information

...knows:

- Credentials

- Privacy Settings

...has:

- Online Profiles

...does:

- Digital Footprint
- Online Reputation

Section 1.2. Establishment and Safeguard of Your Online Presence

Building your online presence allows interaction with others, sharing of interest, and engagement in the digital world.

According to the World Bank (ID4D Practitioner's Guide, 2019), **the basic structure of the digital identity and identification process is based on:**

- **Who are you? → Identification**
Verifying and consolidating pertinent identity information to establish an individual's digital presence
- **Are you who claim to be? → Authentication**
Assessing the authenticity of and individual's claimed identity through the examination of one or multiple personal details (or PII)
- **Are you authorised or eligible? → Authorisation**
Validating specific attributes to determine the authorisation or eligibility of an individual to participate

By virtue of the elements – what a person is, knows, has and does – and the structure of the digital identity and identification, **here are some advice (A), tips (T) and methods (M)** for each key concept in building your online presence.

Personal Information

- **A:** Only share necessary personal information online, such as your name, email address, and professional details
- **T:** Avoid sharing your home address, phone number, or other sensitive information unless necessary. Consider using pseudonyms or initials instead of full names where appropriate
- **M:** Use discretion when filling out online forms, social media profiles, and registration pages. Provide information on a need-to-know basis

Credentials

- **A:** Create strong passwords that are difficult for others to guess
- **T:** Use a combination of letters (uppercase and lowercase), numbers, and special characters in your passwords. Avoid using common words, sequential

numbers or personal references. Consider using passphrases

- **M:** Utilise password management tools, such as LastPass or KeePass, to generate and store complex passwords securely. Enable two-factor authentication (2FA) wherever possible for an additional layer of security

Online Profiles

- **A:** Tailor your online profiles to reflect your professional image and goals
- **T:** Highlight your skills, experiences, and achievements relevant to your desired online presence. Use keywords and industry-specific terminology to enhance visibility
- **M:** Regularly update your profiles to stay current and engage with relevant online communities

Digital Footprint

- **A:** Be mindful of the content you share online and its potential impact
- **T:** Think twice before posting anything. Consider the potential long-term consequences of your online activities
- **M:** Regularly search for your name and review your digital footprint. Set up alerts to receive and check notifications when people interact with you and your digital identity

Privacy Settings

- **A:** Understand and utilise the privacy settings available on different platforms
- **T:** Review and customise privacy settings to match your desired level of online visibility and data collection. Limit access to personal information to trusted connections and on a need basis
- **M:** Familiarise yourself with the privacy settings of social media platforms, email services, websites, apps, and other online accounts. Regularly check and adjust your privacy preferences as needed

Online Reputation

- **A:** Cultivate a positive online reputation through your online interactions and activities
- **T:** Be respectful and professional in your online communications. Engage in constructive discussions and avoid engaging in negative or controversial behaviour
- **M:** Participate in forums, contribute valuable content, and maintain a consistent and professional tone in your online interactions. Regularly monitor your online presence by searching for your name and be proactive in removing or requesting the removal of any unwanted or damaging content associated with your name

Unit 2: Practicing Responsible Online Behaviour



Section 2.1 Nuances of Effective Digital Communication

Clear and Concise Communication is essential in the digital world as people have limited attention spans and receive numerous messages daily. → **Get straight to the point** and avoid lengthy explanations.

Example: Prefer *“Could you please send me the report by EOD?”* to *“I wanted to ask if you could provide me with the report by the end of the day”*. Note: EOD stands for “end of the day”.

Although this rule is generally valid, keep in mind that **different models** of digital communication **require different approaches**. For instance, e-mail is typically used for formal or detailed conversations, while instant messaging (WhatsApp, Messenger, Telegram, etc.) is more suitable for quick exchanges.

Example: If you need to discuss a **complex project** with multiple stakeholders, sending an **e-mail** with a detailed breakdown of tasks and deadlines would be appropriate.

Consequently, **response times also differ**, ranging from a few minutes to a maximum of 24 hours for messages on WhatsApp, up to the generally accepted 72 hours (3 days) waiting time for an e-mail.

Non-verbal cues help convey emotions and intentions. Emoticons, emojis, and punctuation marks can add context and clarify the tone of your message.

They are also a way of expressing oneself in an essential, clear and concise manner, as introduced earlier.

Example: **Thumbs-up emoji**  can indicate a confident and positive tone of **approval**.

In addition to symbolism, also **the effective use of formatting** improves the readability of your messages. Use headings, bold or italicised text, bullet points, and numbered lists **to better organise information and make it easier to understand**.

Example: When sending an e-mail summarising key points from a meeting, use bullet points as follows.

→ **Meeting’s key takeaways:**

- **Report** to be delivered **by December 15, 2023**
- Dissemination to be improved with **Press Releases’ publication**
- Next online **call: January 9, 2024**

Section 2.2 Proper Language, Tone and Netiquette in Online Interactions

Using **appropriate language and tone** is crucial to convey your message accurately,

avoiding misunderstanding.

Be mindful of the words you choose and the tone you adopt **to maintain positive and effective interactions**. And **be aware** that online (writing) communication generally lacks facial expressions and tone of voice. Therefore, proper language and tone have an **increased impact on how your message is received**.

In a global online community, it's important to **be sensitive** regarding social and cultural differences, by utilising a **respectful and inclusive language**.

Examples:

- Prefer *“I see your point, but I have a different perspective”* to *“You are wrong”*, thus avoiding misunderstanding
- **Avoid** using **gender-specific terms** or **assumptions** about someone's background or identity – especially for religion or ethnicity

Although for the proper language and tone there are no obvious differences between online and offline communication, let's introduce the **netiquette** (online etiquette) as a **set of rules that promote appropriate and responsible behaviour in online interactions**.

These rules play a vital role in:

- **Enhancing communication skills**
- **Preventing misunderstanding**
- **Providing guidelines** on socially conduct when interacting and collaborating in a digital environment

Let's focus on these rules and guidelines, including **DO's** and **DON'Ts**.

DO's

Choose proper grammar and punctuation
Use appropriate formatting (bold, italic, paragraph, ...)
Integrate appropriate emojis and emoticons
Always include a subject line
Reply messages promptly
K.I.S.S.: Keep it short & sweet
Fact check before (re)posting
Be cautious with sarcasm
Respect the opinions, privacy and rights of others

DON'Ts

Don't type in ALL CAPS (overuse)
Don't attack or don't use aggressive language
Never send spam
Don't overuse abbreviations
Don't share everywhere and to everyone (use discretion)
“Don't do to others what you wouldn't want done to you”

Section 2.3 Guidelines for Practicing Mindful and Responsible Online Engagement

As engagement in digital platforms and social media starts and increases, it is important to **be aware of potential risks**, particularly for those new to the digital world or working on improving digital literacy skills.



Let's explore the **strategies for effectively managing** these risks and provides **guidelines** for practicing mindful and responsible online engagement.

Key areas of concern that will be addressed include:

- **Overuse and Alienation**
- **Acting based on FOMO**
- **Sharing of Fake News**

Overuse and Alienation

To avoid excessive use in terms of time, leading to alienation and a disruption of the balance between online and offline interaction, the following **guidelines** are provided **to maintain a healthy and productive harmony**:

Time limits:

- Set a daily maximum limit for online activities
- Use calendar apps, reminders, or browser / app extensions to schedule specific time slots
- Monitor your progress and adjust accordingly

Example: Use Instagram's time limit built-in tool with alerts

Social connections:

- Avoid relying solely on online communication
- Foster deeper connections and prevent isolation

Example: Schedule regular face-to-face meetups with friends and family

Mindful digital breaks:

- Incorporate regular offline activities into your routine
- Engage in hobbies, exercise, or spend time in nature
- Refresh your mind and enhance well-being

Acting based on FOMO

FOMO, which stands for **Fear of Missing Out**, refers to the fear of not experiencing or participating in all available opportunities and the associated joy that comes with them. It is characterised by a **curated and idealised perception of other people's lives**, which can lead to **feelings of inadequacy or anxiety**.

FOMO's key aspects include:

- **Constant access** to social media platforms
- **Continuous scrolling** through feeds to stay updated
- Constantly comparing oneself to others and **losing touch with one's own identity**

To mitigate the effects of acting based on FOMO, consider the following **guidelines**:

- **Set realistic expectations**

- Engage in offline activities
- Utilise features (mute / unfollow) to reduce exposure
- Practice digital detox: Tech-free hours or days

Sharing of Fake News

It leads to both an **overall increase in misinformation** (where FOMO has its greatest impact) and **personal reputation damage** (online reputation as a part of digital identity).

It is important to **verify information before sharing it online** → [fact-checking](#)

Fact-checking involves **evaluating the source** by considering its credibility and checking if similar information is reported by reputable news outlets. Here are **two practical tools** for fact-checking:

- **Google Fact Check Tools**
It allows you to explore fake news by performing a keyword search. It has a section called 'recent fact checks' where you can find the most recent news already verified as fake.
- **BUFALE.net – Italy**
A fact-checking website that focuses on debunking and exposing false information and hoaxes circulating online.

5 Glossary entries

Digital Footprint: The trail of information and data that is left behind by an individual's online activities, including social media posts, online purchases, and website visits.

Privacy Settings: Controls and options that allow individuals to manage the visibility and accessibility of their personal information on online platforms, ensuring that only desired individuals or groups can access it.

Two-Factor Authentication (2FA): An additional layer of security that requires users to provide two different forms of identification, typically a password and a unique code sent to their mobile device, to access their online accounts.

Digital Literacy: Digital literacy refers to the ability to effectively navigate, evaluate, and utilise digital technologies and information in various contexts. It encompasses the skills and knowledge required to critically assess digital content, understand online privacy and security, communicate and collaborate online, and make informed decisions in the digital realm. Digital literacy is essential for individuals to participate fully in the digital age and effectively engage with digital tools and platforms.

FOMO (Fear of Missing Out): FOMO refers to the fear or anxiety of not being included or missing out on exciting experiences or opportunities, often fuelled by social media and the constant need to stay connected and updated with others' activities.

5 multiple-choice self-assessment questions



Question 1. Which of the following is true about digital identity?

- Option a: Digital identity cannot be managed or protected
- Option b: Digital identity is not important in today's digital age
- Option c: Digital identity refers to the online presence and information associated with an individual
- Option d: Digital identity has no impact on personal privacy

Correct option: c

Question 2. What is the purpose of managing and protecting your digital identity?

- Option a: To share personal information with anyone online
- Option b: To engage in irresponsible online behaviour
- Option c: To ignore the risks associated with online engagement
- Option d: To establish and maintain a positive and authentic online presence

Correct option: d

Question 3. Why is clear and concise communication important in the digital world?

- Option a. Lengthy explanations are preferred for better understanding
- Option b. Complex language enhances communication effectiveness
- Option c. People have limited attention spans and receive numerous messages
- Option d. Non-verbal cues compensate for unclear messages

Correct option: c

Question 4. What is FOMO in the context of social media?

- Option a: Fear of Missing Out
- Option b: Fear of Missing Others
- Option c: Fear of Maximising Opportunities
- Option d: Fear of Making Online Connections

Correct option: a

Question 5. What is the purpose of fact-checking in online communication?

- Option a. To spread rumours
- Option b. To verify the accuracy of information before sharing
- Option c. To engage in online debates and arguments
- Option d. To share news based on personal opinions

Correct option: b

Bibliography and further references

N.A.

Related material	20230614 BOOMER WP4 Digital Identity and Online Behaviour – EN.pptx
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Reference link	N.A.
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Video in Powtoon format	BOOMER_IDP&IHF_DigitalIdentity&OnlineBehaviour_EN.mp4
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