

Managing your digital shadow

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This factsheet explains how you can manage your online reputation.

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What you do online today could impact you into the future. What does your digital shadow say about you?

When you post or send something online, you can lose control over who sees it and what they do with it. You may never be able to permanently delete an image or text, so it is important that before you send something, think about what you are sending and where it might end up.

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Here are a few things to consider before pressing send:



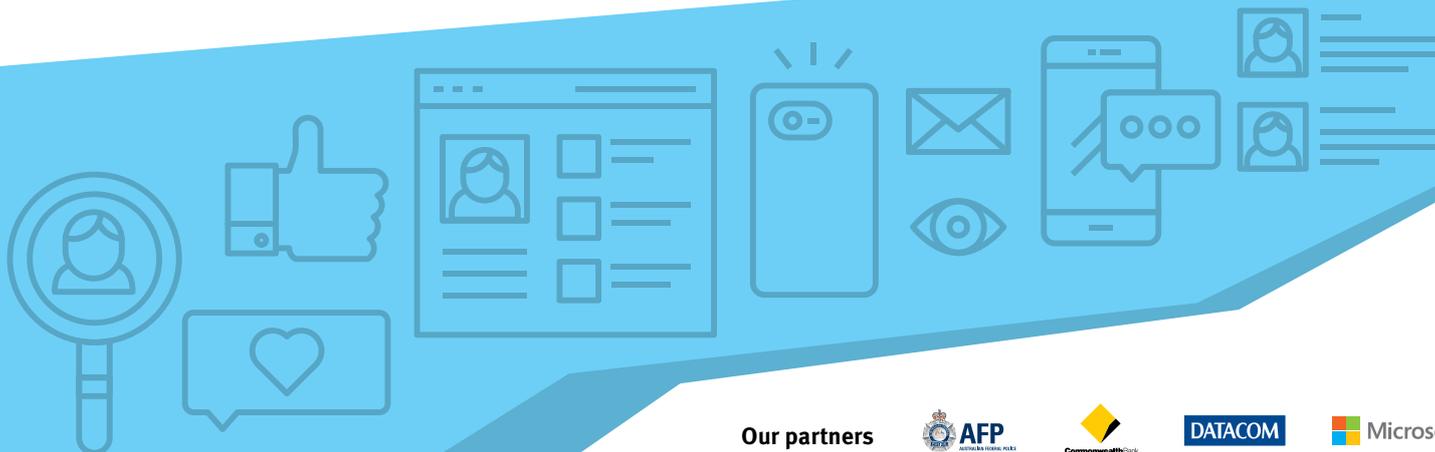
DO YOU KNOW WHO YOU ARE SENDING IT TO?

You might be tricked into thinking you are communicating with a friend, but can you ever be sure that it is only them? Not everyone online is who they say there are.



DO YOU KNOW WHAT THEY WILL DO WITH IT?

Even if you are sure who is on the other end, can you really trust them? Relationships can breakdown over time, so while you might be happy for someone to have your image or video today, tomorrow might be a different story.





CAN IT BE DELETED?

Once you have shared something online, it can easily be shared around to others.

Distribution might start with just your school, but it can quickly spread to your community and beyond. Content can be copied or stored by others, so can be difficult to ensure content is ever deleted.

Settings

Remember that, depending on the privacy settings your friends use, whatever your friends share about you can also affect your digital shadow.



SO WHAT DOES THE LAW SAY?

Content of someone under the age of 18 in little or no clothing, a sexualised pose or engaged in a sexual act may be considered child abuse material.

Even if it's an image or video of you, and you consent, you can still be breaking the law!

Non-consensual image sharing

If someone has created this material of you without your permission, you need to tell a trusted adult and they can assist you in reporting it to police. This is a serious matter and should not be ignored.



HOW WILL IT AFFECT YOUR FUTURE?

A future employer, university or sporting organisation might research you online. What they find may influence their decision on whether to offer you an opportunity.



HAVE YOU BEEN PART OF THE PROBLEM?

By storing or helping to distribute this type of material, you are contributing to this serious issue. Distributing these images maliciously is viewed even more seriously, and you may be committing an offence.



WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU HAVE RECEIVED AN EXPLICIT IMAGE?

If you have received this type of material, delete it without forwarding it. Tell the person who sent it to you that you are not interested in being a part of this. If you know who the person in the image is, let them know what is going on. They wouldn't want to be the last to know.

SO WHAT CAN YOU DO ABOUT IT?

You can change your digital shadow — if you don't like what is out there, take ownership and have it removed or balance it with positive content.

Research yourself online and see what's out there about you. Regularly search for your name, username, email address and phone number in online search engines.

You can also use meta search engines for a deeper search.

Tip: Deactivate any old social media accounts that you may no longer use.

Remember:

Your online reputation is your responsibility so take control of what your digital shadow says about you!