

How to stay fine online

Consider your digital footprint, personal details and conduct, writes FIONA LUCAS

Have you ever thought about the journey your data takes when you send an email, a message or use an app on your iPad or phone?

While data is travelling to us it can be intercepted or even followed, like a postman delivering a letter. The mail is placed in a box, collected by a truck, taken to a depot, scanned and sorted, put into boxes, collected and finally delivered. At

anytime the mail could get lost or stolen, though there are systems in place to try to prevent this.

It is no different with our data online, but often we don't put any systems in place to protect our information and this is where we expose ourselves to risk.

We love sharing photographs and videos via Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, blogs, Vine, and, most fun, playing games.

However, we don't think about who else is looking at our information and collecting it when we sign up to use an app or a program.

There are four steps to follow to be safe online:

BE RESPONSIBLE — Consider your own privacy and the privacy of

others when you post online.

BE RESPECTFUL — Treat others as you like to be treated. Don't be rude or insult others online.

BE RESILIENT — If something online affects you or offends you, close it down. Talk to a trusted adult or friend about the issue. Never post when you are angry or upset. Always try and understand a situation first.

RESEARCH — Check out a story before you share it. Make sure it is true or you are not forwarding something that may have a virus attached.

Everything we do online makes up part of our online identity. It's related to everything you say, what you do and the types of pictures you post and the blogs,

pages and people you follow. This is your online reputation.

Your future reputation can be affected by what you put online now. Posting positive content, sharing your achievements, such as volunteering and charity work, can help when you start looking for your first job.

GAMES

So much fun but only play with people you know. Don't use your real name in a gaming forum and never reveal personal details such as phone number, address or email. Make your username fun or meaningful, but be respectful of others and don't make it offensive.

APPS

If an app wants to connect to

another account such as Facebook or Instagram, be cautious if it asks for more information than is necessary. Remember nothing is really free. When an app is free, you pay for it by allowing it to access your data or to try and sell you things. It is usually better to ask your parents for the paid version of an app if it removes the ads. Be careful of apps that encourage you to pay to level up. These can cause you to waste a lot of money.

Fiona Lucas is an online cyber safety and social media educator. She is a Stay Smart online partner, blogger and founder and author of *Futureproof Your Kids*.

SEVEN ONLINE SAFETY TIPS

1. Have a passcode on your mobile phone.
2. Never share your passwords with anyone, not even your friends. Write passwords and user names down and give to your parents
3. Don't use the same password for different devices. Change them often.
4. Check security settings on all your devices.
5. If you are playing online games, play only with people you know and trust
6. Avoid using location-based apps (GPS, "checking in").
7. Manage your time and get outside and offline.

CONNECTED: Think about who else could be looking at your information when you sign up to use an app or a program.