

Digital reputation

Teenagers

All internet users will have a digital or online reputation. Essentially, this digital reputation is the opinion that others hold about the user. Children should be encouraged to think about their digital reputation when interacting online. Digital reputations are informed by content that is posted online and how people communicate online. People can be judged on how they behaved as a teenager well into the future. The following tips can help teens understand and manage their digital reputations.

- Talk to your teen about managing personal information on social networking sites. Encourage them not to put any personal information on their profiles. This includes their phone number, personal email address, home or school addresses, or the name of their school.
- Encourage your teen to be careful when they post photos and to consider how what they post might be viewed by others.
- Talk to your teen about the potential social, academic, employment and legal implications of posting inappropriate material of themselves or others online. Encourage them to think about who might see the content and what the impact might be now and in the future.
- Remind your teen that much of what they do online can be made public, and may go beyond the group of friends they intend it to reach. A good general guide is for teens not to post photos that they would not want strangers to see.
- Help your teen understand that information they provide online or via SMS can be shared more broadly than they might think. Even if their profile is set to private, they can't control what their friends will do with the information they post. Encourage them to think carefully before sharing images or controversial messages online or via mobile.
- Remind your teen to take care with others' digital reputations. They should not post images of others without their permission and should take care with comments about others.
- Ensure teens understand the features and terms of use of social networking sites—in particular how to set their profile to private.

More information

The Cybersmart program provides a range of cybersafety materials for parents and their children. For more information, resources, advice and tips, visit the Cybersmart website at www.cybersmart.gov.au. Encourage your children and teens to take a look around the website. If you have young children, you may like to explore it together to help them understand how to protect themselves against online risks and make the most of their experiences online.