Social Media & Digital Presence

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SOCIAL MEDIA AND DIGITAL PRESENCE

Social media has become an essential part of modern life. It allows people to communicate instantly, share ideas, learn new skills, follow current events, and build relationships with others across the world. Whether you use social media to stay in touch with family, support your children's education, promote a small business, or search for employment, understanding how to use these platforms effectively is an important digital skill.

In addition to communication, social media influences how others perceive us. The information we share online contributes to our digital identity and can affect personal relationships, educational opportunities, and even career prospects. Learning how to create a positive online presence helps us make better decisions about what we share and how we interact with others.

💡 **Tip:** Social media is a tool. The way you use it determines whether it becomes a positive or negative influence in your life.

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WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

Social media is much more than a place to share photos or keep in touch with friends. It has become an important part of communication, education, business, and professional networking. Understanding how these platforms work allows you to use them more effectively and avoid common risks.

During this module, you will learn how to use social media confidently while protecting your privacy and personal information. You will discover how to build a positive digital presence, communicate respectfully online, identify trustworthy information, and use social media to support your personal and professional goals.

💡 **Tip:** The skills you learn in this module will help you both online and offline, as many employers and organisations value responsible digital behaviour.

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WHAT IS SOCIAL MEDIA?

Social media refers to websites and applications that allow people to create, share, and exchange information through the Internet. Unlike traditional media such as newspapers or television, social media encourages interaction. Users can create content, comment on posts, share opinions, ask questions, and communicate with people from all over the world.

Today, social media is used for many different purposes. Families stay connected through messaging and photo sharing, businesses promote their products and services, teachers provide learning materials, and professionals build valuable career connections. Communities also use social media to organise events, raise awareness about important issues, and support local initiatives.

💡 **Tip:** Different social media platforms are designed for different purposes. Choosing the right platform helps you achieve your goals more effectively.

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CHOOSING THE RIGHT SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM

There are many social media platforms, each with its own features and purpose. Understanding the differences can help you decide which platform is most suitable for your needs.

Facebook is widely used for connecting with family and friends, joining community groups, and following local organisations. **Instagram** focuses on sharing photos and short videos, making it popular among individuals and businesses that want to communicate visually. **TikTok** allows users to create short, creative videos that are often educational or entertaining.

For professional networking, **LinkedIn** is the leading platform. It enables users to showcase their work experience, develop professional connections, and discover career opportunities. **YouTube** provides educational and entertainment videos, while **X (formerly Twitter)** is often used for sharing news, opinions, and real-time updates.

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Each platform serves a different audience and purpose. You do not need to use every platform - choose the ones that best match your interests and goals.

💡 **Tip:** Before creating an account, think about why you want to use the platform and who you want to connect with.

Did You Know? Many organisations use several social media platforms at the same time because each one reaches a different audience.

THE BENEFITS OF SOCIAL MEDIA

When used responsibly, social media offers many advantages. It allows people to communicate instantly regardless of distance, making it easier to stay connected with family and friends. Communities can organise events, schools can share important information with parents, and businesses can communicate directly with their customers.

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Social media is also an excellent source of learning. Many organisations, universities, libraries, and experts publish free educational content, tutorials, webinars, and online courses. Following trusted pages allows you to continue learning new skills throughout your life.

Professionally, social media helps people discover job opportunities, promote their skills, build business relationships, and expand their professional network. Many employers advertise vacancies and share company updates through their social media pages.

Example

A small business owner uses Facebook and Instagram to promote handmade products, answer customer questions, and receive online orders without needing a physical shop.

💡 **Tip:** Follow organisations, educational institutions, and experts whose content helps you achieve your personal or professional goals.

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WHAT IS A DIGITAL PRESENCE?

Your digital presence is the collection of information about you that exists on the Internet. It includes your social media profiles, photographs, comments, videos, online reviews, and any content you create or share. Even when other people tag you in photos or mention you online, that information becomes part of your digital presence.

Everything you post contributes to your digital identity. Over time, these activities create a picture of who you are, your interests, and how you communicate with others.

A positive digital presence can increase trust, create professional opportunities, and demonstrate responsible online behaviour. Taking care of your online reputation is just as important as maintaining a positive reputation in everyday life.

💡 **Tip:** Regularly search for your own name online to understand what information about you is publicly available.

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WHY YOUR DIGITAL PRESENCE MATTERS?

Many employers, educational institutions, and organisations review applicants' online profiles before making decisions. Public social media profiles often provide a first impression of a person's communication style, interests, and behaviour.

Sharing respectful, helpful, and positive content demonstrates responsibility and digital maturity. On the other hand, inappropriate photographs, offensive language, or misleading information may create a negative impression and affect future opportunities.

Building a positive digital presence does not mean pretending to be someone else. Instead, it means presenting yourself honestly while communicating respectfully and responsibly.

⚠ **Remember:** Your online reputation can influence opportunities long after something has been posted.

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CREATING A POSITIVE ONLINE PROFILE

Your profile is often the first thing people notice when they visit your social media account. A clear profile photo, accurate information, and a friendly introduction help create a positive first impression.

Choose a recent photograph where your face is clearly visible and avoid images that may appear inappropriate or unprofessional if your profile is public. Complete your profile with truthful information about your education, interests, or work experience, depending on the purpose of the platform.

Review your profile regularly to ensure that your information remains accurate. Remove outdated details, broken links, or content that no longer represents who you are today. Keeping your profile updated shows that you are active and responsible online.

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EVERY POST MATTERS

Every photo, comment, video, or message you publish becomes part of your digital presence. Although many platforms allow you to delete posts later, other people may have already viewed, copied, or shared the content. For this reason, it is important to pause and think before posting.

Ask yourself whether your content is respectful, accurate, and appropriate for the audience who may see it. Consider how your post might be interpreted by friends, family members, colleagues, employers, or future educational institutions. Sharing positive, useful, and respectful content helps build a strong online reputation.

💡 **Tip:** If you feel emotional or upset, wait before posting. Taking a short break can help you make better decisions.

⚠️ **Remember:** Once something is shared online, it may remain accessible even after it has been deleted.

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PROTECTING YOUR PRIVACY

Most social media platforms allow you to control who can see your profile, posts, and personal information. Reviewing your privacy settings regularly helps you decide what information is public, what is shared only with friends, and what remains private. Taking a few minutes to check these settings can greatly improve your online safety.

Avoid sharing sensitive information such as your home address, phone number, financial details, passwords, or travel plans. Limiting the amount of personal information you publish reduces the risk of identity theft, scams, and unwanted contact.

💡 **Tip:** Review your privacy settings every few months, especially after updates to the platform.

⚠️ **Remember:** If your profile is public, anyone may be able to see your posts.

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KEEPING YOUR ACCOUNTS SAFE

Your social media accounts contain personal information, so protecting them is important. A strong password should be unique for each account and contain a combination of uppercase and lowercase letters, numbers, and special characters. Avoid using easily guessed information such as your birthday or name.

Enable two-factor authentication (2FA) whenever possible. This adds an extra layer of security by requiring a second verification step when logging in from a new device. Even if someone discovers your password, they will have difficulty accessing your account.

💡 **Tip:** Consider using a trusted password manager to create and store strong passwords securely.

Did You Know? Many hacked accounts are compromised because the same password is used across multiple websites.

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RECOGNIZING FAKE ACCOUNTS AND ONLINE SCAMS

Not everyone online is who they claim to be. Fake profiles are often created to spread misinformation, collect personal information, or trick people into sending money. Be cautious when receiving unexpected friend requests, especially from people you do not know.

Warning signs include profiles with very few photos, recently created accounts, unusual messages, or offers that seem too good to be true. If you receive a suspicious message asking for personal information or money, do not respond. Instead, report the account and block it if necessary.

💡 **Tip:** Always verify a person's identity before sharing personal information online.

⚠️ **Remember:** Legitimate organisations will never ask for your password through social media.

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FINDING RELIABLE INFORMATION ONLINE

Social media allows information to spread quickly, but not everything you read is accurate. Anyone can publish content online, so it is important to evaluate information before believing or sharing it.

Check who created the content, whether the information is current, and whether other trusted sources report the same facts. Government websites, universities, recognised news organisations, and official company pages are generally more reliable than anonymous accounts or unverified posts.

💡 **Tip:** Read the entire article instead of relying only on the headline.

Did You Know? False information often spreads faster than verified information because it attracts attention and strong emotions.

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SHARE RESPONSIBLY

Misinformation is false or misleading information that is shared without proper verification. Sometimes it is shared accidentally, while in other cases it is created deliberately to mislead people. Sharing inaccurate information can cause confusion, unnecessary fear, or harm.

Before sharing a post, take a moment to verify its accuracy. Look for evidence, compare information from multiple reliable sources, and avoid sharing content that cannot be confirmed. Responsible users help create a more trustworthy online environment.

💡 **Tip:** If you are unsure whether something is true, it is better not to share it.

⚠️ **Remember:** One click on the "Share" button can spread misinformation to hundreds of people.

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COMMUNICATING WITH RESPECT

The way we communicate online should reflect the same respect we show in face-to-face conversations. Be polite, listen to different opinions, and avoid using offensive language or personal attacks. Healthy discussions encourage learning and understanding, even when people disagree.

Remember that written messages can sometimes be misunderstood because facial expressions and tone of voice are missing. Before posting a comment, read it again and consider how someone else might interpret it.

💡 **Tip:** If a conversation becomes emotional, take a break before replying.

⚠️ **Remember:** Respectful communication helps create a positive online community.

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CREATING A SAFE ONLINE ENVIRONMENT

Cyberbullying is the use of digital technology to intimidate, threaten, embarrass, or repeatedly harass another person. It can happen through social media, messaging applications, online games, or email, and it can affect people of all ages.

If you experience cyberbullying, do not respond with more negative comments. Save evidence such as screenshots, block the person, and report the behaviour to the platform. If the situation continues, speak with someone you trust or contact the appropriate authorities if necessary.

💡 **Tip:** Support others who may be experiencing online harassment by reporting abusive behaviour.

⚠️ **Remember:** Everyone deserves to feel safe and respected online.

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SAFE SOCIAL MEDIA HABITS

Developing good online habits helps protect both your privacy and your personal information. Accept friend requests only from people you know, be careful when clicking links, and download files only from trusted sources. Regularly update your apps and devices to benefit from the latest security improvements.

Think carefully before granting applications permission to access your social media accounts or personal data. Reviewing connected apps occasionally helps you remove those you no longer use.

💡 **Tip:** Logging out when using a shared or public computer helps prevent others from accessing your accounts.

Did You Know? Software updates often include important security improvements that protect your devices from newly discovered threats.

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BEING A RESPONSIBLE DIGITAL CITIZEN

Being a responsible digital citizen means using technology in a respectful, ethical, and safe way. Responsible users respect other people's privacy, communicate politely, protect their own information, and think carefully before posting or sharing content.

Good digital citizenship also means respecting copyright, giving credit to original creators, reporting harmful content, and helping create welcoming online communities. Every positive action contributes to making the Internet a safer and more useful place for everyone.

💡 **Tip:** Treat people online with the same kindness and respect that you expect in everyday life.

⚠️ **Remember:** Your actions online can have a positive impact on both your own reputation and the experiences of others.

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BUILDING YOUR ONLINE NETWORK

Networking means building relationships with people who share your interests, profession, or goals. Social media makes networking easier by allowing you to connect with colleagues, classmates, local organisations, and professionals from around the world. These connections can provide advice, support, learning opportunities, and even future employment.

Building a strong network takes time. Follow people and organisations that inspire you, participate in discussions, and share useful content. Meaningful interactions are more valuable than simply having a large number of followers or connections.

💡 **Tip:** Focus on building genuine relationships by engaging with people respectfully and consistently.

Did You Know? Many job opportunities are shared through professional networks before they are publicly advertised.

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LINKEDIN: A PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL NETWORK

LinkedIn is a social media platform designed for professional networking and career development. It allows users to create an online profile that highlights their education, work experience, skills, certifications, and achievements. Employers often use LinkedIn to search for potential candidates and learn more about applicants.

A complete LinkedIn profile should include a professional photo, a clear summary of your experience, and accurate information about your education and skills. You can also connect with colleagues, follow companies, and participate in professional discussions related to your field of interest.

💡 **Tip:** Keep your LinkedIn profile updated as you gain new skills, complete courses, or change jobs.

⚠️ **Remember:** Everything you include on your profile should be truthful and up to date.

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JOINING ONLINE COMMUNITIES

Many social media platforms offer groups or communities where people with similar interests can share knowledge, ask questions, and support one another. These communities may focus on hobbies, parenting, education, health, local events, or professional topics.

Joining a group allows you to learn from others, discover useful resources, and participate in discussions. Before posting, take time to read the group's rules and observe how members communicate. Being respectful and contributing helpful information helps you become a valued member of the community.

💡 **Tip:** Join groups that match your interests or career goals rather than trying to participate in too many communities at once.
Did You Know? Many local organisations and community events are announced first through social media groups.

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SOCIAL MEDIA FOR LEARNING

Social media is more than entertainment - it is also a powerful educational resource. Universities, libraries, museums, businesses, and experts regularly share free articles, videos, webinars, tutorials, and online courses that help people develop new skills.

By following reliable educational pages and professionals in your area of interest, you can continue learning long after completing a course. Social media also allows you to ask questions, participate in discussions, and exchange ideas with learners from around the world.

💡 **Tip:** Follow educational organisations and trusted experts whose content supports your personal or professional development.

⚠️ **Remember:** Always verify information before applying advice found on social media.

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FINDING CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Many employers use social media to advertise vacancies, promote their organisation, and connect with potential employees. Following companies that interest you allows you to stay informed about new opportunities and learn more about their workplace culture.

A positive online presence can also support your job search. Employers may review public profiles to gain a better understanding of a candidate's communication style and professionalism. Sharing achievements, completed courses, volunteer work, or professional interests can demonstrate your commitment to continuous learning and personal growth.

💡 **Tip:** Before applying for a job, review your public social media profiles and remove content that does not represent you professionally.

Did You Know? Recruiters often search for candidates on professional networking platforms such as LinkedIn.

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FINDING A HEALTHY BALANCE

While social media offers many benefits, spending too much time online can affect productivity, sleep, and overall well-being. Creating healthy digital habits helps you enjoy technology without allowing it to interfere with daily responsibilities or personal relationships.

Consider setting time limits for social media use, taking regular breaks from screens, and making time for offline activities such as exercise, reading, or spending time with family and friends. Being mindful of how you use technology supports both your physical and mental well-being.

💡 **Tip:** Turn off unnecessary notifications to reduce distractions and help you stay focused throughout the day.

⚠️ **Remember:** Quality time offline is just as important as staying connected online.

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KEY TAKEAWAYS

Social media is a valuable tool for communication, learning, networking, and personal growth when it is used responsibly. Every post, comment, and interaction contributes to your digital presence and shapes how others see you online.

Protect your personal information, think carefully before sharing content, communicate respectfully, and verify information before passing it on. By developing positive digital habits and maintaining a professional online presence, you can use social media confidently while creating opportunities for learning, collaboration, and career success.

💡 **Final Tip:** Your digital presence is like a long-term investment. Every positive action you take today helps build a trustworthy reputation for the future.

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