

Newspapers in Education encourages you to become more aware of your surroundings and reduce risks by participating in

SITUATION AWARENESS

>> Clean up your digital footprint

Here's a checklist with some tips to get you started

- Search Yourself Online** - Do a Web search of your first and last name. Don't forget to try slightly different spellings too. Find something about yourself you don't like? If it's posted by a friend, ask them to take it down. Or try contacting the site administrator and request they remove any unwanted content.
- Check Privacy Settings** - The privacy settings on your favorite website or social network may have changed since you last checked. Take time to understand current settings so you know just what you're sharing, and update them if there are things you don't want public.
- Use Strong Passwords** - Whether email or banking, it's a good idea to have different passwords for different sites. Change the passwords across your various accounts to a combination of words, numbers and symbols that are easy for you to remember but hard for others to guess.
- Update Software** - Computer viruses and spyware can wreak havoc on your computer. Check for software updates you may have previously ignored or download one of the many free, safe programs available online to ensure you have the most up-to-date security for your system. You can even schedule automatic updates and let your computer do the work for you!
- Think Before You Post** - Your digital footprint is more than the information available about you on the Web; it's about your interactions too. Before you put anything online, ask yourself if it's something you really want others to see or know about you.
- Maintain Your Mobile Device** - Take time to understand your mobile device settings and set a password. It's also a good idea to review any apps you've downloaded and their information-sharing policies. Delete ones you just don't use.
- Build A Positive Reputation** - Use your online presence to build a positive reputation for yourself and inspire others! Start a blog about the good things happening in your community, make a virtual fundraising campaign for a cause you're passionate about, or text a compliment to a friend.

< checklist provided by the *Family Online Safety Institute* >