



## What is Digital Identity?

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**Digital identity** refers to the **information** that we share or that is available about us on the internet or in digital spaces. This includes **personal information** such as our name, age, address, and other details that we might share online. It also includes the **things we post** or share online, including photos, videos, comments, and opinions.

Digital identity can have both **positive and negative impacts** on our lives. It can **help us** to connect with others, express ourselves, and share our interests and passions. However, it can also **put us at risk** of cyberbullying, identity theft, and other online dangers.

It's important to **be aware of our digital identity** and take steps to protect it. This includes being careful about what we share online, using strong passwords and security settings, and being mindful of our online behavior and interactions with others.



What is digital identity?

A digital identity is the compilation of information about you that exists online. Your digital identity includes anything online that is associated with your name, such as social media posts, interactions, articles, publications, institutional affiliations, and more.

Our digital identities are created by how we present ourselves, and how we are seen by others, in both personal and professional settings.

But why is understanding digital identity important?

Who we are online gives others insight into who we are in real life. This leads us to make assumptions about people even if we have never met them in person.

How do we create a digital identity?

Step 1: Google Yourself

The first step to creating your digital identity is to realize that if you engage online you likely already have one. Take inventory of how you appear online by Googling yourself, or looking at past social media posts and interactions.

[A graphic of a search engine appears with the words "Who am I?" typed into the search bar.]

Ask yourself: Does this digital image represent who I am right now? Are these profiles active, and do I want to change them? Why do I want to use this social account, and What are my goals for my digital identity?

Step 2: Set goals.

The next step to creating your digital identity is to understand your goals. Do you want your digital identity to represent your professional aspirations, or your personal and social aims? Someone marketing themselves as an academic or business professional may have different goals and a different digital identity than a comedian, an artist, or a teacher.

Do all your social accounts align with the same goal and persona? What are future employers seeing when they google your name? Think about whether your online presence is hindering any personal or professional aims. Decide on a goal and stay consistent across your platforms.

### Step 3: Be authentic

Your digital identity should ultimately reflect who you are offline, whether this is your personal or professional life. Being authentic will help you maintain a consistent image across platforms.

[An animated man appears on screen holding his phone. Beside him is an enlarged phone screen containing his social media profiles. He appears the same in both.]

Are digital identities always authentic?

While authenticity is important, what we see online does not always reflect how a person is in the real world. Keep in mind that a digital identity is a curated image of a person that does not always reflect their whole self. The online world can even contain false identities that differ drastically from who the people behind them really are.

[The woman's social media account is displayed on screen. An X appears to show that her identity is false and an arrow points to a different figure that represents her true identity.]

Our digital identity can affect the interactions, opportunities, and reputation we have in the real world. When creating your digital identity, it is important to take inventory of your online past, define your goals, and present yourself authentically across all platforms.