

You are what your search results return.

We are living in an age where Life is an Open Book Test. Like the open book test in school where you just needed to know where to look to find an answer, today everything we need or might want to know is presumed to be a Search Engine Query away.

We no longer "know what we know". We have to confirm everything with a search. If we are publishing , we confirm it with a hyperlink to our search results. Ask someone about a person you just met ? Sure, but then make sure to do a search on them as well.

Im not telling you anything new, but what I am telling you is that the way it is today is nothing like what it will be for kids being born now.

Our past, and really our profile was defined by the contents of shoeboxes and milkcrates. The places where we kept old papers, pictures, grades, notes we passed to the girl we had a crush on.

Over the last few years, its evolved to the equivalent digital placeholder. Its on Flickr, photobucket, Myspace, Facebook, wherever we host and store all the digital pictures, videos, blog entries , comments and discussions we participate in that we share publicly. Or its in an email database that is hosted or backedup online that we may or may not choose to make public.. And these are just the elements we self maintain.

Then there are the elements the rest of the world maintains about us. Put aside privacy issues. There is plenty out there that is published for us, or about any of us. It may be the picture in the local newspaper or neighborhood website of your 3rd grade recital, the box score of your little league baseball game. What groups you were in at your high school, along with all the pictures that didnt make the yearbook. The paper you did in college. The company website with the pictures of the training class you took.

Our lives are being documented , cataloged and indexed whether we like it or not. But since its a relatively new phenomena, there really isnt much history out there . Our pasts, even of high school kids has far more offline and out of the reach of search engine spiders, than online

But for kids being born now, like my daughters, both under the age of 4, it will be completely different.

As their dad, I will be building their digital profile through the pictures and videos I share as a proud parent (as i write, my oldest is at her dance class with camcorder in action recording her every move). I will go online to get anything and everything I need to keep me up to date on her schoolwork and activities and everything and anything she does outside our home. What I cant find online, if its associated with her activities, like pictures or videos parents of her friends took, I will encourage them to share them online, as Im sure they will do with me.

Taking pictures and video is so cheap and easy today that its not inconceivable we could recreate full days and weeks through media.

By the time she starts dating, I wont need to greet her dates at the door with a shotgun, I will have a digital history of the poor kid and know pretty much everything about him, before I meet him.

We are beginning a generation where much of everything they do will be recorded, monitored and maintained and more importantly, shared online. Every generation of parents has used the tools they can afford to be our kids biographers till they leave home. This generation will have the fortune or misfortune of those tools having an ever declining cost to with no cost per capture (no developing pictures or even having to buy tape), and as it stands today, little or no cost to share all those digital hours online.

As parents we wont pay attention or even attempt to understand the lifelong consequences of our actions. The pull of sharing dance class and report cards and recital videos with family and friends will be just too strong.

Plus of course the kids themselves will blaze their own digital media paths as different from their parents as possible. But it will be shared digitally and online.

Which brings me to the point of this post

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Hopefully, writing all this out will remind me that everything digital that I share online will become an entry in my kids digital profile that will always be just a search away and stay with them forever. Nothing will be thankfully lost in the garage anymore.