

A 48-Hour Digital Odyssey

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Picture this, you're walking through a connected city, your phone ringing with notifications, your smartwatch tracking your steps, and cameras capturing your every move. It's as if you're leaving invisible footprints, not in the sand, but in a spider-web of data. Welcome to the digital age, where our actions, both online and offline, contribute to this intricate web known as our "digital footprint." But what if I told you that these footprints are more than just random marks in the sand? They're clues, intimate snippets that offer a window into who we are and what we are. And just like a hunter studying its prey, there are entities out there learning our behaviors and routines, setting the perfect traps. So, are you ready to unravel this web? What follows is a grand tale of discovery, analysis, and the unsettling realization that someone out there is always watching, always learning, and always ready to make their move.

Imagine you're an explorer, venturing into uncharted territory with a compass and a map. That's precisely how I approached this 48-hour expedition into the labyrinth of my digital life. Armed with a diary; my modern-day compass, and a keen sense of awareness; my map - I set out to document every digital trace I left behind. The first day included an 8-hour shift at work, a hive of activities where my digital footprints were as numerous as the steps I took. But that was just a fraction of the day; there were also moments of leisure, errands, and downtime. The second day was a deep dive into academic projects, a solitary journey through lines of code and virtual

textbooks. I meticulously recorded each interaction, whether it was a swipe on my phone, a click on my laptop, or even the passive capture by security cameras and stoplight lenses. Think of these devices as the landmarks on my map, each one a pit stop in my digital odyssey. My phone was the most visited landmark, used 400 times over the two days. Stoplight cameras captured me 56 times, while my credit card made 7 appearances. Work clock-ins were at 4, and my Apple Watch chimed in just once. But the journey didn't stop at the devices; it extended into the activities that consumed my time. Social media took up nearly 5 hours, while coding and internet research devoured a whopping 12 hours and 43 minutes. All this data was then transformed into visual narratives; two pie charts that serve as the treasure maps to my digital existence. These charts are more than just pretty visuals; they're the X marks the spot on my digital treasure map, revealing not just where I've been, but also hinting at where I might be headed next.

So, what do these digital fragments tell us? If our digital footprint is a treasure map, then the analysis is akin to deciphering an ancient scroll, unlocking its secrets. At first glance, the data suggests a life deeply entwined with technology. The phone, the modern-day Swiss Army knife, is clearly the MVP, the North Star guiding most of my digital interactions. But it's not just about frequency; it's about the nature of these interactions. While individually these data points might seem like mere tiles, but when assembled, they construct a digital mosaic that's far more intricate. Take social media, for instance. Those hours weren't just mindless scrolling; they were moments of connection, of sharing art, and engaging in the sophisticated analysis of contemporary visual culture-otherwise known as "looking at memes." It's a digital plaza where I wear many hats: the artist, the humorist, the jester, and the friend. But let's not forget the time spent in Safari, which was primarily devoted to reading manga. This isn't just casual reading; it's an exploration of storytelling, art, and culture through a different lens. It's like being a digital

globetrotter, journeying through different worlds with the swipe of a finger. The hours devoted to coding and research, on the other hand, reveal a different side-a focused, analytical mind that thrives on problem-solving and intellectual challenges. It's as if I'm a digital archaeologist, sifting through lines of code to unearth hidden treasures of knowledge. Yet, there's more to this story. The multitude of interactions with stoplight cameras and security systems paints a picture of a world that's always watching, always recording. It's as if I'm not just the explorer but also the explored, the prey in someone else's hunt. And who might these hunters be? They could be marketers, data analysts, or even government bodies, all keen to understand my behaviors, my routines, and yes, my weaknesses. They're the modern-day treasure hunters, and my data is their treasure.

But who's on the other end of this digital treasure hunt? According to the peer-reviewed article "Digital Footprints: Opportunities and Challenges for Online Social Research," our data is a goldmine for a variety of stakeholders. Marketers, for instance, are the cartographers of the digital realm. They map out our likes, dislikes, and habits, crafting personalized labyrinths of ads that we're more likely to navigate. It's not just about selling products; it's about selling an experience tailored just for us. Yet, it's not all sunshine and rainbows. This constant surveillance has its dark clouds. Our freedom of speech could be stifled, knowing that our words are being monitored and possibly used against us. It's like walking on a tightrope over a pit of societal judgment. And what about political rights? In a world where data can be manipulated, our very democracy could be at stake. But while many aspects of my online and offline life are being tracked and recorded, there are still facets of my existence that go unnoticed-like my in-person interactions with friends and family, the laughs and tears I share with people that those hunters

will never know about. These are the hidden gems that make us truly human, the X-factors that keep us enigmatic, even in a world that thinks it knows us.

Works Cited

Golder, S. A., & Macy, M. W. (2014). Digital Footprints: Opportunities and Challenges for Online Social Research. **Annual Review of Sociology**, 40, 129-152.