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## Digital Life Newsletter For Parents

**Dear Parents and Guardians,**

This month's issue deals with **Reducing Your Digital Footprint.**

I hope you find it helpful.

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The Internet is ubiquitous and it has become an integral part of our consumer experience. A major problem with buying online is the digital footprint we leave behind, a kind of breadcrumb trail of information. Even on social media sites, our habits or 'Likes' illustrate our preferences and in turn this information can be used for target advertising.

This is done through the use of "cookies" which are a kind of short term memory for the web. They are stored in our browsers and enable a site to "remember" little bits of information between pages or visits. Cookies are widely used to make the web experience more personal, which is generally a positive thing. However, some cookies collect data across many websites, creating 'behavioral profiles' for each of us. These profiles can then be used to decide what content or advertisements to show us. Indeed it has never been so easy to be targeted through online advertising.

One of the pitfalls of the ‘breadcrumbs’ we leave behind is that our behaviour is communicated to retailers or private companies. In addition to the use of cookies, our ‘footprint’ is left behind through our IP address. As a result, websites offering train or air travel have recently come under fire for ‘hiking’ up prices upon a second visit to the site from the same IP address. They identify the consumer because of the information they retained upon their first visit to the site. This is indeed not the only way of pushing us to buy but it is also a way of increasing their margins (showing a seemingly growing demand by increasing the price enticing us in turn to buy on the spot). It's the classic bait-and-switch.

To avoid the trap there are a few tricks to learn and put into use.

When it comes to buying online, don't be an impulsive shopper. Indeed it is critical that you shop around, and view fares and prices on more than one site.

When shopping online, use more than one browser, or more than one computer if possible. This will prevent the website from recognizing you upon a second visit (as the IP address is different) and therefore avoid a price increase if you do choose said product.

Open a browser under “private browsing”. This option is available in Google Chrome, Firefox as well as Internet Explorer. For most browsers you simply click the menu and then click on new private browsing window. This will allow you to browse freely but upon closing the window all information collected by the Cookies is deleted.

All the information in this newsletter was taken from the following website:

<https://www.digitalparentingcoach.com>