UNIT
2

Digital Citizenship

Student Packet · Grades 6-8

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media

Which Me Should I Be?

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Directions

Take a stand! Look at the line in the room that says HARMLESS on one end and HARMFUL on the other.

HARMLESS - HARMFUL

Now look at the case studies below. These case studies describe situations in which people present themselves in different ways online. If you think what somebody did was *really* harmful, stand at the harmful end. If you think it's *totally* harmless, stand at the harmless end. If you think it's a little bit of both or somewhere in between, stand in the middle.

Before you take your stand on the line, ask yourself:

• What **motivates** this person to present himself or herself differently online?

• What are the **consequences** of the person's actions? How do you think it might end up affecting the person? How might it affect other people?

• Do you think it is okay to present a different identity in this situation? Why or why not?

Case Studies

1. Mikayla isn't old enough to have a public profile on MyFace. Her parents also don't allow her to have one yet. But all of her friends are on MyFace. So she creates a fake profile with the name Kayla. She puts all kinds of information about herself there, like photos, videos, and all the things she would want to share about herself. She tells her friends about her fake profile so they can become her friends online. She keeps it a secret from her family.

2. Brian likes to chat on a sports fan site that has IM (instant messaging). People only know him by his screen name, so no one knows his true identity. Brian likes to start debates in chat rooms by responding to people's posts about the best teams, players, and stats. He sometimes says things he wouldn't say offline. A couple of times he has said bad words and called people stupid.

3. Arianna visits a website that makes fun of a student at her school. She logs in under a fake name and leaves mean comments without anyone knowing who she is.

4. Jolie, who is 12, creates a fake social networking profile with a different name that says she's 18. She uses a photo where she's dressed up and wearing sunglasses, so it's hard to tell how old she is. She starts a relationship with an older guy she meets online. He's really fallen for her and wants to meet her in person.

5. Alejandro wants good reviews and comments on his YouTube videos, so he creates several user names. He uses them to leave good comments about his own videos.

6. Rob doesn't normally get good grades. But on a website for people looking for summer jobs where he has a profile, Rob says that he gets straight A's. He thinks this might help his chances of getting a job.

7. Becky thought it was funny to join the "I hate redheads" group in her online social network. She just thought it was a silly group to join, even though she doesn't really hate people with red hair. The next day, her friend Maureen (who has red hair) avoided her at school.

8. In real life Phil is a quiet, shy guy. But when he's texting he feels more outgoing than he does in person, and sometimes he says things he normally wouldn't say. A girl who has the same math teacher as Phil texts him asking for the answers to the math quiz: "hey cutie phil … giv me quiz answers PLZ!!" Phil likes the girl and wants to be her friend, but he would never share answers in person, and he knows he could get in trouble. He decides to text her the answers anyway.

9. Emma likes to play GoEscape, a virtual game world where players use avatars to play. She pretends to be a boy and uses a male avatar because she thinks she'll be more accepted by the other players. She interacts with others in the game through her avatar, and has made a couple of really close friends through the game.

10. Caroline likes Ethan, a guy in class. She knows where he hangs out online. She pretends to be a boy named Mike from another city who has the same interests as Ethan, so she can join his online community. She becomes his friend as "Mike" to get to know more about Ethan.

Use Common Sense!

When you decide to change some or all of your identity online, how do you know whether it is harmless or harmful? Pay attention to how you feel, and think about how someone else might feel if they knew. Ask yourself these questions:

• Do I feel good about doing this? Or do I feel as though I'm doing something wrong?

• Am I harming others? Am I harming myself?

• Am I still true to who I am on the inside?

• Would I do this or say this in person, with people I know?

Lesson Assessments

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Which Me Should I Be?

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1. Which of the following is an example of a RISKY way to present oneself in a different way online?

a) Raquel creates an avatar in a virtual world with pink hair, even though her hair is brown in real life.

b) Dan's profile picture is an image of his dog.

c) Nick lies to someone he meets online by saying he's in college.

2. On Lucy's social networking profile, she posts that she is older than her real age and that she likes rock music, which she actually doesn't like. Which of the following might be a possible consequence of how Lucy presents herself online?

a) Lucy might get attention from older people who think she is the age she has posted.

b) People might start talking to Lucy about rock music.

c) Both a and b

3. Evan likes Maria, but she is dating Josh. Evan pretends to be Maria online and posts angry messages on Josh's blog so that Josh thinks she is mad at him. Evan is _____ Josh by pretending to be Maria.

a) deceiving

b) helping

c) motivating

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