



Target Audience

Children aged 11-14



Slide 1

In today's assembly we will be exploring identity online. This is really important and I hope that this assembly is just the start of lots of discussions with your friends, in school, at home and in the future.

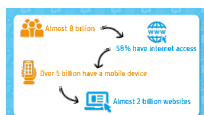


Slide 2

When Sir Tim Berners-Lee and his associates created the internet 30 years ago, they wanted it to be free for everyone and dreamed of an internet for all.

Click through to reveal.

So, is that what has happened?



Slide 3

Almost 8 billion people have internet access. Over 5 billion have a mobile device. Almost 2 billion use webcams.

Click through to reveal: [K Y5fYGcWU](#) / [bYfbYh](#) Y'gUhg



Slide 4

How do people express their identity online? Is the internet a safe and welcoming place for all? Do people feel free to be themselves online?



Slide 5

On the next few slides, you will see some statements that I'll ask you to decide whether you agree or disagree with.

Agree or disagree: I don't understand fake people online. Be real or don't bother.

Take a vote on the above and discuss.

Why did you vote this way?

Some people might feel a pressure to be 'real' online. This is understandable because lots of people share their real lives online and might expect others to do the same. People who think it's not so important may argue it is a personal choice, and remind us that there are certain aspects of our lives that are sensible to keep private, like your full name and your location.



Slide 6

Agree or disagree: Most people want to be themselves online.

Take a vote on the above and discuss.

Why did you vote this way?

Whilst there are people who are reluctant to be themselves online, there are lots of people happily sharing their lives and expressing themselves online. YouTubers, body positive campaigners and mental health campaigners are just some of the people who use the internet to do great things. They clearly see the internet as a place where it's important to be their true selves.



Slide 7

Agree or disagree: Being yourself online makes you more vulnerable to the haters and bullies.

Take a vote on the above and discuss.

Why did you vote this way?

It's not always easy to 'just be yourself' online. For some people, the ability to create a slightly different identity online, or be anonymous, can make people feel safer to ask questions and explore aspects of their personalities online. Deciding how much of yourself to share online can be difficult, and different people handle this in different ways.



Slide 8

One way a lot of people respond to worries about receiving negativity is to share the best possible version of themselves online, and leave out anything they don't think will be interesting or acceptable to their followers.

Is the internet the only way that people present this best version of themselves?

We not only do this online. We act or behave differently in a variety of situations; whether it be meeting someone for the first time, with our best friends, or in the classroom. This is not a new concept, although the connectivity of the online world lets us change our behaviour, with lots of different people, at the same time. Although we know that lots of people do this, it can still sometimes make people feel like their lives are not as interesting as others'.

Note to educator

Encourage learners to speak to a trusted adult if they ever feel the pressure to 'keep up' with others online, and need help managing these feelings.



Slide 9

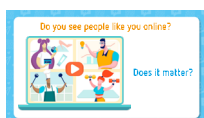
Now, let's think about the accounts you see online and what they share. Close your eyes if this helps you.

Ask the following questions one by one, and allow learners time to reflect. Take some answers if time.

- Who do you see sharing a lot of their lives online?
- What do they post online?
- How old are they?
- What do they look like?
- What are they interested in?
- Is there a variety of people or are they very similar?

What you see online depends on the people you follow and what you're interested in, but the algorithms on online platforms mean that you are often shown, or suggested to follow, more of what you like. This can be helpful, but could also make it seem like the internet isn't really for everyone.

To engage with the wide range of people that are out there, we have to actively look for them, and keep looking.



Slide 10

Do you see people like you online? Not just others who look or dress like you, but people who have the same opinions, use the same language, or have the same interests, culture or beliefs too?

What difference does it make to you if you see someone like you online or talking about something which is important to you online? Does it matter?

Discuss the above and take some answers.

It does matter. People who regularly see people like them online will probably feel that the internet is for them, and that is something that we want everyone to feel.

Note for educator

If learners are reluctant to answer you could ask them to put their hands up if they think it is important to see people like them online. You could then simply move on, or ask if anyone would like to explain why they feel this way.



Slide 11

As we have seen, the internet is a place where we can access lots of information, share our lives online and create an identity online.

Whilst we are seeing progress there is still work to be done. The internet is not for all yet. Not everyone feels accepted, represented or comfortable enough to put themselves out there online.

This is why some people act a little differently online.

This is why some people only share certain things with their closest friends online.

This is why some people say that being 'real' makes you vulnerable.

This is why some people do not feel part of it.



Slide 12

What needs to change?

If we want people to be able to be themselves online, is it up to individuals to be more 'real' or is it up to all of us to make the online world a place where people feel free to be themselves?

Discuss the above and take some answers.

We often expect individuals to be real and honest online, although we know that this can be very difficult. How can we all work together to make the internet a more welcoming place?

Allow learners time to reflect. You can take answers now, or return to this question on Slide 15, which has some suggestions.



Slide 13

Let's return to the words of Sir Tim Berners Lee, this time with the full quote. What it can be easy to forget, is that the internet does not become mean or negative by itself. It is made up of people, and everyone plays a part in making the internet what it is. We have the power to make it a place where people feel accepted and welcome.



Slide 14

The internet was designed for all and it should be a place where people feel free. Rather than expecting people to be real or perfect we should think about how we can create an internet for all.

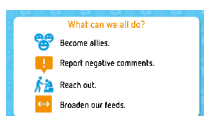
A place where everybody feels...

F – Fairly treated

R – Represented

E – Equal

E – Empowered



Slide 15

Here are some suggestions for things we can all do to make the internet a place where more people can feel free to be themselves:

- **Become allies** - Let's support people who are not well represented online. Remember how it makes you feel to see people like you online, or when you don't.
- **Report negative comments** – We can all help to make sure that those messages that make people feel the internet is not for them are taken down, and that others do not have to see them.
- **Reach out to people or groups who are being targeted online** – These are the people who deserve our attention, not the people being mean.
- **Broaden our feeds** - Look for more variety in the accounts you follow. There are lots of people doing great things online. Perhaps you will be inspired to do something similar?