

Digital Identity

Digital identity refers to how “one’s online image is perceived by others” ([Ref](#)). Other terms used for this concept are online identity, and online reputation. The term also has a technical meaning when referring to online privacy and credentials.

In today’s overly digital world, it is very difficult to not have a digital identity. **If you do not foster the identity you want, an identity will be created for you.**

Tip: Google Yourself Often

Google yourself often (e.g. monthly). Resist the urge to click on anything negative as that increases the likelihood that google will show the result. Searching won’t affect what comes up, but clicking tells Google that something is interesting. Set up a Google alert on your name. That is how I found the ‘other’ Rebecca Hogue.

Activity: Google Yourself

1. Begin by opening an ‘incognito window’. If you search with your normal browser, your results will be influenced by your browsing history. By opening incognito, you are going to see results that are closer to what other people will see.
2. Reflect on what you like or not like about what you are seeing.
3. Check the image tab. Are the photos of you? Are they photos you want people to see?
4. Try searching for variations of your name. Are their variations that get better results?



After doing this activity the first time, I ended up ensuring that all my social media sites used the same profile image. The reason I did this was to ensure that a Google Search would show mostly my professional headshot. Having the same picture in multiple places meant that it showed up sooner on the list.

I have always used my middle initial as a way to differentiate myself from the other Rebecca Hagues out there. If I take away the J, I find a bunch of results for another Rebecca Hogue. Unfortunately one of the others was found guilty of killing her child, although the boyfriend did it.

In order to increase your professional presence on search results, you need to be a creator on the web. This can be in the form of a blog or website or podcast. The idea is that you need to create content that is associated with your name. This increases the chances that something you created shows up at the top of the search results.

References

Obana, T., Takubo, M., Orito, Y., Murata, K., Sai, H. & Okamoto, T. (2021). The Online Attention game for digital identity education: An exploratory study. *The Review of Socionetwork Strategies* 15, 251–276. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.umb.edu/10.1007/s12626-021-00077-6>



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