


Chapter 4

Are We Followed in the Digital World?

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ABSTRACT

A digital footprint is simply defined as the trace of users' online activities. Another definition explains the digital footprint as the trace left by the online and offline activities of users electronically in electronic media (database, server, etc.). Social media shares, web pages visited, e-mails sent, and online games played are some of the parts that make up the digital footprint. In short, the records of the interaction between the individual and the virtual electronic world constitute the digital footprint. In this direction, the aim of this study is to determine the digital footprint awareness of university students and to determine their general views on the digital footprint, and the time they spend in electronic tools and environments.

INTRODUCTION

The online environment is cultural because everything is digitized or the images, sounds and objects we encounter are part of the internet or digital has a role in their creation (Burnham, 2018). Everything produced in this environment since the early days of the internet can be considered a digital culture element. When it is recalled that Williams, as mentioned above, states the three levels of culture that characterize the elite culture witnessed or recorded by those living at that time or the intersection of the two, digital culture is also witnessed by people living in this time and space but also included in the network. It is seen that being on the network means leaving

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a footprint on the network, and since all data is recorded, it also covers the second level. Thumim (2012) states that digital culture also includes situations where digital technologies are not accessed or used. According to her, digital technology includes but is not limited to the internet, which shapes the production and consumption of images, sounds and texts within the culture. For example, the digitization of culture does not mean that there will be no more pencil-on-paper drawings; it also means that such a drawing now has the potential to be scanned and circulated with digital technology (Thumim, 2012). Digital culture can be traced back to when the internet first emerged, when computers were founded with electronic chips, when differential analyzers, transistors or integrated circuits were invented, and even to Leibniz's mathematics, where the origins of digital are based. However, what is the object of study in this study is the period when, together with personal computers, the World Wide Web and browsers, the period when it became widespread among ordinary users, out of the framework of the military, university, computer geeks and computer engineers when ordinary people began to participate in this production. However, digital culture is a set of cultural, social and political processes (Thumim, 2012). Digital culture can not only be reduced to technological developments but the significant effects on the social and political environment are seen.

This network culture, which was accelerated by the United States government's decision to establish a secure network during the Cold War period and the establishment of ARPANET (advanced research project agency network) in 1969 after various stages, presents us with a wide range of data today. The culture created by this environment, which generally seems to have been established only for military purposes, was nourished by many different veins (Poe, 2014). Storing, categorizing and sharing the acquired information, which started in the 16th century, is essential in this historical process. In this sense, reference cannot be made to a military origin alone. Technological inventions accelerated by the excitement of the Cold War era and supported by power institutions were also fed by countercultures and geek cultures (Poe, 2014). "As We May Think" (1945), written by Vannevar Bush, profoundly influenced many scientists who laid the foundation for the formation of digital, and *Dream Machines/ Computer Lib* (1974), written by Ted Nelson, who found the hypertext (linked text), provided a broad vision on the thinkers of the period. Tim Berners-Lee, who created the World Wide Web and wrote HTML (hypertext markup language), Marc Andreessen and Eric Bina, creators of Mosaic, the first web browser, have been essential mediators of participation in digital culture.

The emergence of the internet has restructured the information and communication environment. Like publishing that emerged at the beginning of the 20th century and the printing press 500 years ago, the internet has introduced new ways of producing, acquiring and sharing what people need to know. It has changed the way old media are used. It has reshaped broad social relations, including the unintended consequences of

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