



# Digital Footprint awareness

A European survey to analyse EU citizens' understanding of digital footprint

Realised by



*The digital footprint is the trail of data you leave behind when you do anything online. There is an enormous quantity of our personal and professional data out there on the internet, but are we aware of that?*

The **European Digital Learning Network** has already acknowledged, since its establishment four years ago, the importance of **raising awareness** on this matter. Therefore, in collaboration with the **Lifelong Learning Platform**, DLEARN has promoted a **self-sustained research** to collect data on the issue and get a better understanding on the level of **European citizens' awareness of their digital footprint**. The research also looked at how much control citizens currently exercise over their digital footprint, and on the level of control they would like to keep.

## Demographics

Survey collected between July 2018 and August 2019

**12.769 women**

74,64% declare to possess intermediate digital skills



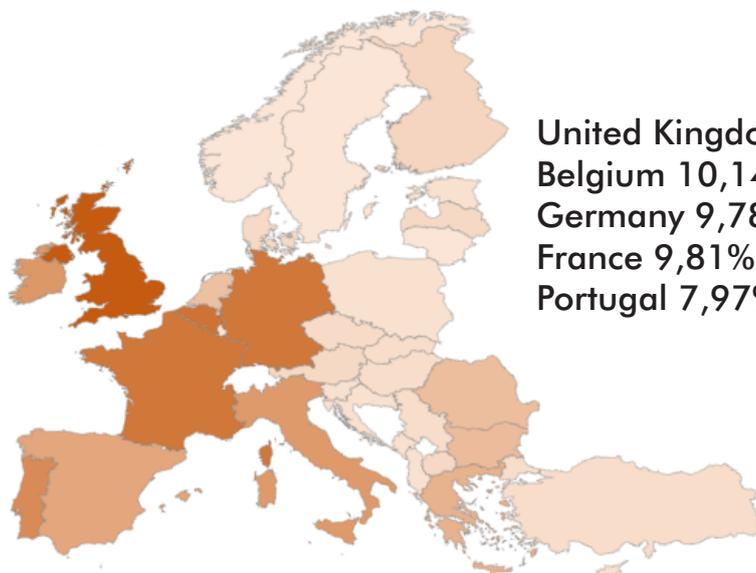
**19.728 responses**

10.959 aged between 26 and 50 years old

**13.746 employed**

## Countries

Italy 6,70%  
Ireland 6,88%  
Spain 5,6%  
Greece 4,5%  
Romania 3,5%  
Bulgaria 3,7%



United Kingdom 12,35%  
Belgium 10,14%  
Germany 9,78%  
France 9,81%  
Portugal 7,97%

## Main findings

80%

Do not read privacy policy text in full before agreeing to new subscriptions

80,36%

Try to be more mindful of what they publish online

92,65%

Pay particular attention with the disclosure of financial information

78,10%

Have recently changed privacy settings on social media

70,44%

Acknowledge that they are not in full control of their digital identity

50,45%

Would like their data to remain private and not used for any purpose

72,36%

Suggest that Social Media Companies should provide more opportunity for media education

78,75%

Think that social media platforms and service providers should comply with stricter regulations

## Recommendations

Thanks to this survey we can draw an interesting profile of the European average internet user. People from our sample claim to be definitively sensitive about a safe and mindful use of the internet. The results show, however, that there is still misunderstanding on the issues related to digital footprint. In fact, while analysing the results of each questions we can notice some contradictions. As a matter of fact, the suggestion on how to address this, ultimately, can be found in the voice of citizens themselves: there should be more support directly through social media on how to manage our own digital footprint, while receiving more information through campaigns and education sector. Our citizens are asking to enhance their awareness, give them more tools to control their data and higher control over companies which should comply with stricter regulations.

*Increase training opportunities to trigger the sense of responsibility for personal data shared online*

*Boost knowledge in the sector of cybersecurity through conveying easier concepts and solution to citizens that needs to protect themselves and their families when navigating online*

*Shorten the distance between social media companies and citizens to establish a system of feedback loops and assistance on how to protect themselves from harmful behaviours*

*Disseminate a culture of positive behaviour online through education from an early age*